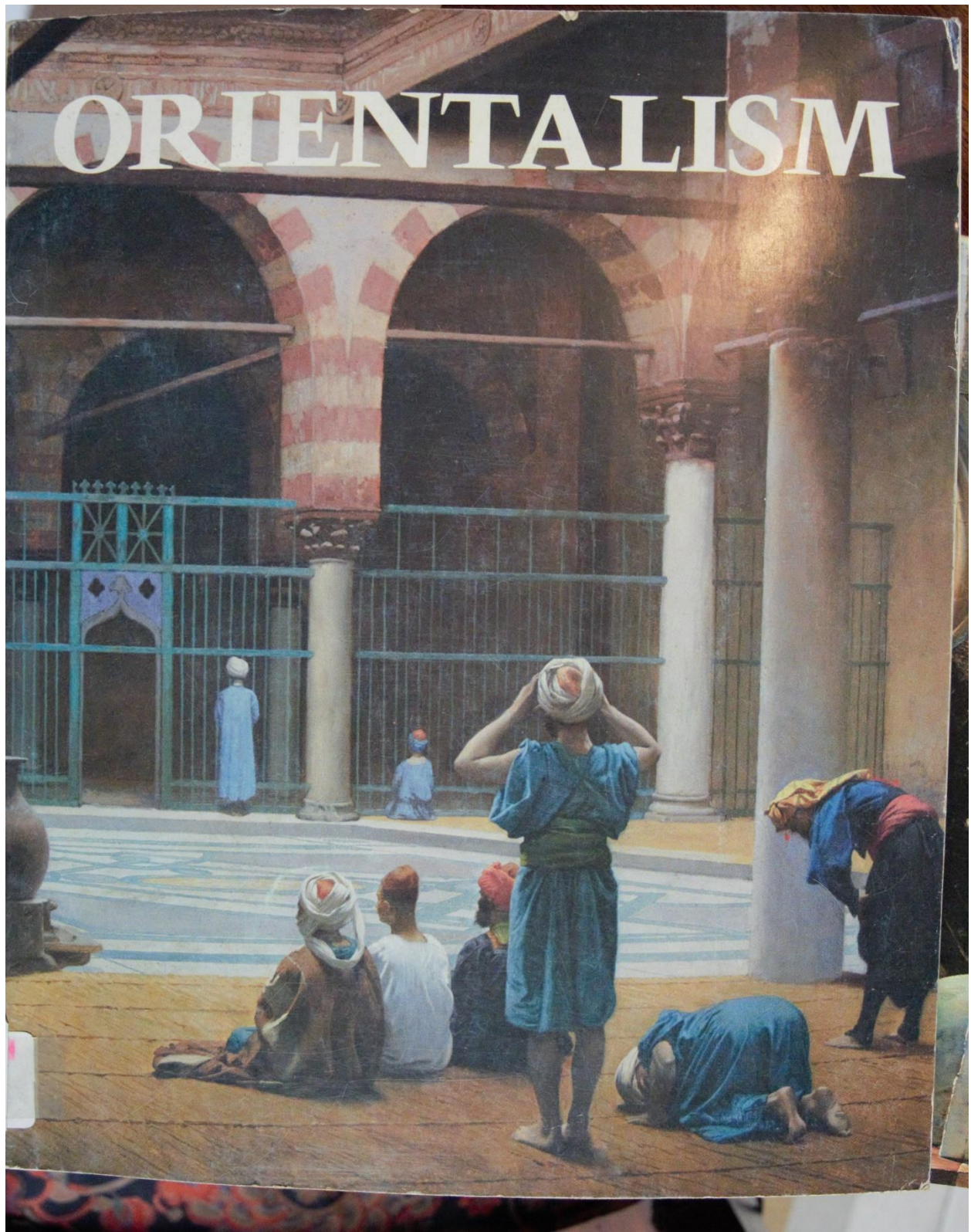


ORIENTALISM



NTALISM

THE NEAR EAST IN FRENCH PAINTING 1800-1880

DONALD A. ROSENTHAL

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
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WORD

The conventional view of nineteenth-century painting separates art and artists into movements and schools and tends to treat these somewhat artificial constructs as if they were hermetic cells among which no communication was possible. The reality, of course, was quite different. By examining a phenomenon that runs through the century and cuts across aesthetic allegiances, an exhibition like *Orientalism* sheds a new light on interrelationships that were at least as real and important a feature of the nineteenth-century art world as the succession of schools and movements with which we already are so familiar.

Dr. Donald Rosenthal, Chief Curator of the Memorial Art Gallery, has devoted several years to the planning of this exhibition which, in fact, grows out of his dissertation research on the Orientalist painter Jules-Robert Auguste. It seems particularly appropriate that the Memorial Art Gallery, a university-related public art museum, should undertake a project in which scholarly research undergirds an exhibition that presents in a new context important works by such major masters as Delacroix, Ingres, Géricault, Gérôme and Renoir as well as interesting canvases by a host of less well-known figures. There is no conflict, in such an undertaking, between research and scholarship on the one hand and public education and enjoyment on the other. The former are essential preconditions for the latter.

We are pleased that the exhibition will be shared with the Neuberger Museum at the State University of New York College at Purchase, and are grateful to Suzanne Delehanty, director of the Neuberger Museum, for her support and cooperation.

BRET WALLER

Director

Memorial Art Gallery
of the University of Rochester

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The staffs of all the institutions lending to the exhibition have been very generous with their help. In particular I wish to acknowledge the advice and cooperation of: Sona Johnston of the Baltimore Museum of Art, William R. Johnston of the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; John Walsh, Jr., of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Sarah Faunce of the Brooklyn Museum; Robert T. Buck, Jr., and Douglas G. Schultz of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Patrick Noon of the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; Katharine Baetjer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Jacques Foucart, Pierre Rosenberg, Maurice Sérullaz and Arlette Sérullaz of Musée du Louvre, Paris; and Joseph Rishel of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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DONALD A. ROSENTHAL

CTION

In recent years, a renewed interest in realist painting of the nineteenth century has led to an increased demand among collectors for Orientalist paintings of the period. Auction sales of nineteenth-century art in London, Paris, New York and other centers have been filled with scenes of Bedouins riding through the Sahara, sunsets on the Nile, and slave markets or traders' shops in Cairo and Constantinople. The seemingly inexhaustible supply and frequently high quality of these Orientalist pictures serve as a reminder of the great interest in exotic countries that swept the art-buying public of Europe during the last century.

What did Orientalist art mean to the culture that produced it? To begin with, in France, the center of the craze, the Orient in the nineteenth century meant the Near East, or the Islamic world—the Arab countries of North Africa and Western Asia, Turkey, Turkish-controlled Greece and the Balkans, Persia, and the Moslem ruling class of northern India—both in its contemporary culture and its ancient past. The Far East was by no means unknown—one thinks of the rage for "chinoiserie" in the decorative arts of the eighteenth century—but it exerted far less attraction on the public imagination. The interest of the French public in depictions of the Near East reflected above all France's military and political commitments there, from Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign of 1798 to the colonization of Algeria and its neighboring territories. England, preoccupied with its immense colonial empire in India, limited its attention in the Near East to Egypt—the critical communication link to India—and to the Holy Land, with its Biblical associations. To the other countries of Europe, lacking major colonial empires, the Orient was less immediate, its exoticism more remote.

Orientalist art should not be confused with Oriental art: It represents the European artist's view of an unfamiliar culture, rather than a view of that culture from within. To a surprising extent, artists of the conflicting stylistic movements of nineteenth-century France adopted similar attitudes toward the Orient. Frequently this created a curious parallelism in the works of painters—Delacroix and Ingres, Manet and Gérôme—whose approaches to art are usually presumed to have been diametrically opposed.

The unifying characteristic of nineteenth-century Orientalism was its attempt at documentary realism. Yet few of the Orientalist painters spent a significant portion of their lives in the Near East, and it may be questioned whether any knew its culture really well. Orientalism was an aspect of Romantic escapism that continued to thrive long after Romanticism had lost its vigor, because the Near East in fact continued to provide an escape for the restless and adventurous in spirit throughout the century. Before accepting

Orientalist painting as a documentary record of the Near East as it appeared more than a century ago, we must bear in mind that this art shows us the Islamic world only through the eyes of an alien culture.

The flowering of Orientalist painting, then, was closely associated with the apogee of European colonialist expansionism in the nineteenth century. Many of the French Orientalist painters undoubtedly agreed with the ideals of colonial officials, soldiers, and adventurers in the Near East; should this in some way invalidate their art at a time when colonialism has been discredited? In his recent study of "Orientalist" imaginative literature and scholarship in England and France since 1800, Edward W. Said finds much to condemn in the often brilliant writings of this school.¹ For Said, Orientalism in Western literature is a mode of thought for defining, classifying, and expressing the presumed cultural inferiority of the Islamic Orient: In short, it is a part of the vast control mechanism of colonialism, designed to justify and perpetuate European dominance.²

Orientalist Salon painting similarly is not without its overtones of cultural superiority, particularly in lumping together the entire Near East as an undifferentiated "Orient" and in projecting fantasies of eroticism and violence on this Oriental "other." Nevertheless, many French artists sincerely admired the peoples of the Near East, even if for the wrong reasons. Eugène Delacroix's admiration for the supposed "noble simplicity" of the Moroccans (who managed to maintain their independence from France, throughout the artist's lifetime) was genuine, and derived from a criticism of European civilization that had been current since the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Delacroix's evaluation of Islamic art was less open minded.) In this study, French Orientalist painting will be discussed in terms of its aesthetic quality and historical interest, and no attempt will be made at a re-evaluation of its political uses.

Although American and Canadian museums, particularly those established in the nineteenth century, are rich in French Orientalist paintings, no exhibition has ever been held of this significant body of work. An Orientalist exhibition organized in America must inevitably take a different form from one held in France. Works by the great figures of the Salons—Delacroix, Ingres, Fromentin, Gérôme—were all sought by wealthy American collectors of the period, and may be seen in many North American museums. The lesser Orientalists, whose work the French government often encouraged, purchased, and consigned to provincial museums, are less well represented in American collections. An American exhibition of Orientalism will, therefore, emphasize the high points of the movement rather than exploring its little-known byways. The vast Salon "machines" rarely found their way across the Atlantic, and are

not extensively included in the exhibition; in contrast, many fascinating and little-known sketches for these works are in North American museums. Finally, the works of a number of major Orientalist painters either are not represented in America or were not available for loan; in order to present this crucial work the Musée du Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, have very generously lent a number of key works.

The selection of works in the exhibition necessarily reflects the realities of physical condition, loan availability, and financial considerations. Since any selection can provide only an introduction to such a vast field, the traditional methodology of scholarly catalogue entries seemed inappropriate; instead, the text has been presented as a survey of the Orientalist movement, and places the works in the exhibition in a broader context. The exhibition is limited largely to the French school, the most important of the Orientalist schools and the one best represented by far in North American collections. Though no national school was immune to influences from the others, the French school by its vast extent most nearly represented all the tendencies of nineteenth-century European Orientalism, often in works of outstanding quality. A small group of paintings by non-French artists influential or known in Paris indicates the diverse Orientalist tendencies of the other European schools.

The dates chosen as the approximate boundaries of the period under examination are 1800 to 1880. Although Orientalism has had a continuous existence in Western art at least since the Renaissance, nineteenth-century Orientalism differed from that of earlier periods in its emphasis on documentation, which usually required a trip to the Orient by the artist. The production of Orientalist pictures had by no means ceased by 1880; if anything, the movement had become organized and institutionalized by the end of the century as never before. Nevertheless, Orientalism in this period was essentially a by-product of the Romantic exoticism of the early nineteenth century; though well-painted pictures continued to be produced after 1880, by then the imaginative force of the movement was spent. There is no aspect of late nineteenth-century Orientalism, including the "decadent" Symbolist Orientalism associated with the *fin-de-siècle*, that was not already fully developed before 1880.

The principal history of French Orientalism is Jean Alazard's *L'Orient et la peinture française au XIX^e siècle d'Eugène Delacroix à Auguste Renoir*,³ published in conjunction with the centennial of the French conquest of Algeria. Alazard's book is an intelligent critical study that can still be read profitably today. Nevertheless, like all such works, it reveals the preconceptions of the time in which it was written. The author, for example, makes much of

the North African pictures of Renoir, an artist for whom Orientalism was by no means a central issue. On the other hand, he dismisses Gérôme's work as "cold and inanimate,"⁴ thus neglecting both this artist's contribution and his great influence on younger painters. Following the pattern of early twentieth-century criticism, Alazard views the history of French Orientalism as a wholly self-contained stylistic evolution, largely ignoring the influence of foreign schools and the relationship between literature and the visual arts. The factual materials on which some of the discussion is based have also inevitably become outdated with the passage of more than half a century.

No full-length study of French Orientalism has been published in English. The late Philippe Jullian, in *The Orientalists: European Painters of Eastern Scenes*,⁵ attempted to review the entire field of nineteenth-century European Orientalism, taking account of international trends and of literary influences. Despite the author's extensive knowledge of his subject, the resulting discussion is somewhat diffuse.⁶ It is hoped that the present exhibition, and the accompanying text, will serve to introduce the North American museum audience to the vast field of French Orientalist painting, a field touched upon by great masters and practiced by many talented lesser artists who worked in their particular specialties—scenes of everyday life, architectural painting, landscape—with as much skill as the "little masters" of seventeenth-century Dutch painting.

I BEFORE THE ROMANTICS

Orientalism was by no means a new phenomenon in Europe during the nineteenth century. The Islamic world and Christian Europe had been in continuous, often violent contact since the Arab invasion of Spain in the eighth century. The soldiers of the Crusades (eleventh through thirteenth centuries) brought back to their native countries the splendid Near Eastern textiles and bronze aquamaniles that fill the cathedral treasuries of Europe and were widely imitated. As early as the fifteenth century, Western religious paintings frequently depicted "Orientals," including North African blacks, in their exotic attire. A favorite vehicle for such depictions was the *Adoration of the Magi*, in which the three kings adoring the Christ child were often shown swathed in turbans and ornate Eastern robes.

European artists first began to visit the Islamic world during the early Renaissance. Catholic Europe had watched with indifference as the Byzantine Greek empire collapsed with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. The Byzantine rulers, heirs to an ancient artistic tradition, had seen no need to import Western artists into their realm. The new Ottoman sultans of Constantinople initially were interested in maintaining good diplomatic and trade relations with the West. Ottoman art had not yet attained its full development, and Western, particularly Italian, art carried considerable prestige. In 1479-80 Sultan Mehmet II invited the prominent Venetian painter Gentile Bellini (c. 1429-1507) to Constantinople; there Gentile, laden with honors, painted the portraits of the Sultan (London, National Gallery, fig. 1) and his court dignitaries, and perhaps initiated some decorations of the royal seraglio. After his return to Venice Gentile occasionally introduced exotic physiognomies, costumes, and locations into his religious paintings, creating a longstanding vogue in Venice for orientalizing pictures. An example is the *St. Mark Preaching in Alexandria* (Milan, Brera,

Fig. 1 (left)
Gentile Bellini, *Sultan Mehmet II*, c. 1479-80.
London, National Gallery.

Fig. 2 (right)
Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, *St. Mark
Preaching in Alexandria*. Milan, Brera.



Brera, fig. 2), completed after Gentile's death by his brother, Giovanni Bellini, with its anachronistic, fanciful, yet precisely rendered mosques.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time of conflict between an aggressive, expanding Ottoman empire—which nearly succeeded in capturing Vienna in 1683—and Western Europe. The hostilities characterizing this period discouraged visits by established artists to Ottoman Turkey and its Mediterranean provinces. Even at this period, however, young or adventurous European artists found their way to the Near East: The Dutch painter Jan van Scorel (1475–1562) visited Rhodes and Jerusalem around 1520, and the prominent French painter Simon Vouet (1590–1649) is said to have accompanied a French ambassador to Constantinople in 1611–12.

More common was the attachment of artists to military expeditions, such as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's attack on Tunis in 1535. Charles's artist, the Dutch-born painter Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen (c. 1500–1559), produced factual images, such as the lost *Portrait of Mulay Ahmad*, known from a vigorous free copy made by Peter Paul Rubens around 1610 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts). In the following century the Bohemian printmaker Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677) sketched the fortifications of Tangier in Morocco, then a target of English military interest. Similarly, the Florentine engraver Stefano della Bella (1610–1664), who was active for many years in Paris, seems to have visited Cairo around 1650 and to have sketched the harbor, perhaps in preparation for an engraving of the subject. In general, views of the Near East and its people were much more common in prints or illustrated books than in painting at this period. Those painters who traveled to this part of the world tended to show few lasting effects of the experience in their subsequent work.

In France, during the reign of Louis XIV, the time was not yet ripe for extensive depiction of Oriental subjects in art, for the king regarded the Ottoman empire, and Islam in general, with considerable reserve. In 1682 he nevertheless received an embassy from the sultan of Morocco, an event recorded in a painting by Antoine Coypel (Versailles, Musée National).¹ Some relaxation in attitude can also be seen in literature: The protagonist of Molière's comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670) is taken in by a young man masquerading as a Turkish dignitary, and Racine's *Bajazet* (1672) is a tragedy of contemporary seraglio intrigue. The first translation into French of the *Thousand and One Nights* by Antoine Galland from 1704 to 1717 further increased interest in a picturesque and fanciful Near East.

The succeeding Rococo period produced the first real vogue for Orientalist subjects in French art, music, and literature. At the court of Louis XV the rationalist skepticism of the age produced a

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t, **The Sultana* (left) and *Priest* (right), 1748. Paris, Musée du



oo, *A Pasha Giving a Concert for*
Salon of 1737. London, Wallace



climate more favorably disposed toward the Moslem rulers, who were sometimes depicted in literature or on the operatic stage as wiser, more just, and more magnanimous than their Christian counterparts. Montesquieu's literary satire *Lettres persanes* (1721) and Rameau's opera *Les Indes galantes* (1735), with its ballet interlude *Le Turc généreux*, are among the many examples of this trend.

The visit of the Persian ambassador Riza Bey (1714) and the Turkish embassies of Mehmet Effendi (1721) and Said Effendi (1742) created a sensation in Paris, and the lavish receptions staged on these occasions were sketched and engraved by leading artists.² Antoine Coyseux was called upon to depict the reception of the Persian ambassador at Versailles by the aged Louis XIV (Versailles, Musée National), as well as the reception of Mehmet Effendi by Louis XV. On the latter occasion Charles Parrocel painted an *Arrival of Mehmet Effendi at the Jardin des Tuileries* (Versailles)³ as a cartoon for a series of tapestries, and the ambassador sat for a portrait sketch.⁴ Said Effendi was the subject of an imposing full-length portrait by Jacques Aved (1702–1766), which was received with much enthusiasm at the Salon of 1742.⁵

Dressing up as the "Grand Turk" or his sultana for costume balls became the rage; one artist, the talented Jean Barbault (1705–1766), recorded a carnival party held at the French Academy in Rome in 1748 at which all the students and faculty dressed in costumes of the court of the Grand Turk (*The Sultana and Priest of*



rd, *Mary, Countess of
sh Costume*, pastel.
museum.

1, *A Turkish Lady and
her Attendant*, c. 1740. Kansas City, Nelson
seum.

the Law; Paris, Musée du Louvre, figs. 3 and 4). Barbault's mannered but vivid paintings capture the fantastic quality of this theatrical Rococo Orientalism. Other specialists in the genre, such as Carle Van Loo (1705–1765), produced imaginary lion hunts in the manner of Rubens, or equally fanciful seraglio scenes differing little from the more familiar boudoir subjects so popular at the period (*A Pasha Giving a Concert for his Mistress*, Salon of 1737, London, Wallace Collection, fig. 5; and *A Pasha Having his Mistress's Portrait Painted*, Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, fig. 6).

The improving relations between Paris and Constantinople, due in large part to a manifest decline in the military power of the Ottoman Empire, encouraged a group of minor French artists to establish themselves on the Bosphorus, painting genre scenes, topographical views, and portraits.⁶ The best known of these artists, Jean-Baptiste Van Mour (1671–1737), painted costume studies and crowded, awkwardly composed scenes of receptions at the sultan's court. Van Mour's small pictures are less successful than are the ambassador-portraits executed by Parisian artists in capturing the dominant personalities of the Ottoman court. A more talented observer, the peripatetic Swiss artist Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702–1789), was a frequent visitor to Paris and also spent several years at the Ottoman court. He brought back brilliant studies, in a highly naturalistic and detailed technique, that prefigure many of the Orientalist works of the nineteenth century. (*Mary, Countess of Coventry in Turkish Costume*, pastel, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, fig. 7; and *A Turkish Lady and her Attendant*, c. 1740, Kansas City, Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, fig. 8). Liotard, who affected a Turkish turban and beard long after his return from Constantinople, was unusual for that time in his concern with veracity in recording Oriental subjects.

Although the taste for fanciful Rococo Orientalism waned in the late eighteenth century, the ease and safety of travel to the East increased, and with it came a growth in the popularity of lavishly illustrated travel books such as the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier's *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* (Paris, 1782), with its charming views of Greek and Turkish cities; an interest in the "picturesque" appeal of exotic places was already a part of the pre-Romantic sensibility.

Another factor that heightened Western interest in the Orient at this time was the growing preoccupation with archaeology, particularly of Classical sites, that accompanied the rise of Neoclassicism. Many of these sites were in the Islamic countries or in Ottoman-controlled Greece. Some archeological books were scientific in approach, while others were more philosophical or meditative in





Eugène-Jean Gros, *Sketch for The Lazareth*, 1800-01. Nantes, Musée Arts.

tone, revealing another early Romantic concern: the passage of time and the decay of civilizations. Thus in the Comte de Volney's *Les Ruines, ou méditation sur les révolutions des empires*, published during the Revolution in 1791, the author, surveying the ruins of Palmyra in Syria, reflected:

The aspect of a great deserted city, the memory of past times, the comparison with its present condition, all raised my heart to elevated thoughts. I sat down on the trunk of a column and there, my elbow resting on my knee, my head supported by my hand, sometimes directing my gaze toward the desert, sometimes fixing it upon the ruins, I abandoned myself to a profound revery.⁷

This renewed interest in the ancient past was eventually to lead, during the Romantic period after 1820, to the painting of dramatic historical reconstructions of the ancient Near East.

Illustrated books, such as those by Choisseul-Gouffier and

he Plague of Jaffa,
e.



Volney, were aimed at a small audience. Broad public interest in the Orient was awakened only by Bonaparte's military invasion of Egypt in 1798. Only a few artists actually accompanied the army through Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in this campaign, which was abandoned soon after Bonaparte's return to France and his assumption of the dictatorship. Nevertheless, the books of the Director of the Musée Napoleon, Baron Dominique-Vivant Denon, including *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute-Egypte pendant les campagnes du Général Bonaparte* (Paris, 1802) and *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris, 1808–1825), kept the exploits of Napoleon's army before an interested public. Despite the disappointing military results of the campaign, it proved one of the most popular sources for the school of contemporary history painting that developed during the Napoleonic period.

The undisputed master of this genre was Baron Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835). Already the leading delineator of the Napoleonic legend during the Italian campaigns of the 1790s, Gros in 1801 won a competition with a sketch, *The Battle of Nazareth* (Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, fig. 9). The sketch, for a painting that was to be at least twenty-five feet wide, depicted a brilliant victory won by General Junot in Palestine in 1799. Bonaparte, perhaps hesitating to offer so large a tribute to another officer, forbade Gros from executing the large version. The Nantes sketch, with its frenzied, diffuse composition, is less an attempt at Orientalist local color than a successful evocation of the confusion of battle. Nevertheless its violence, and its forceful colorism, were qualities that



Eugène Delacroix, *Sketch for The Battle of Jaffa*, c. 1805. The Detroit Museum of Arts.

were to become associated with Romantic Orientalism, and the picture had a great influence on the Romantic Orientalist painters. Théodore Géricault paid a thousand francs for the right to have the picture copied, Jules-Robert Auguste made studies of several of the groups of struggling men, and Eugène Delacroix, in an article published in 1848, analyzed the work in detail.⁸

Using part of the canvas intended for the *Battle of Nazareth*, Gros in 1804 executed the masterpiece of Napoleonic Orientalism, *The Plague of Jaffa* (Paris, Louvre, fig. 10; sketch, New Orleans Museum of Art, fig. 11). In a colonnaded courtyard displaying a peculiar hybrid of Islamic architectural styles, the conqueror Napoleon is shown fearlessly touching a plague victim in an improvised hospital. Gros, like most earlier painters who had dealt with Oriental subjects, did not go to the East to verify the details of his composition; the almost complete control of the seas by hostile British forces would in any event have made such a journey very difficult prior to Napoleon's fall in 1815. Gros seems to have relied instead on eyewitness accounts and contemporary prints of Jaffa.⁹ The considerable elaboration of detail between the New Orleans sketch



Trioson, *The Revolt of*
es, Musée National du

and the final version gives evidence of Gros's concern for an accurate setting. Gros continued to use these methods of imparting authenticity to his other large Oriental battle pictures, *The Battle of Aboukir* (1806, Versailles, Musée National; sketch, Detroit Institute of Arts, fig. 12) and *The Battle of the Pyramids* (1810, Versailles). Many beautiful sketches attest to Gros's careful study of Arabian horses, as well as saddles and other decorative objects that he was able to obtain in France; this became the standard method of researching Oriental subject matter in France for a generation.

Though the most successful practitioner of the Oriental battle or history picture, Gros was by no means alone in exploiting this genre. E.-A. Vincent (1746-1816) also attempted a large *Battle of the Pyramids* (1800-03; sketch, Gisors, private collection), P.-N. Guérin (1774-1833) exhibited a *Bonaparte Pardoning the Rebels of Cairo* (Salon of 1808; Versailles), and many lesser artists made essays in this vein.

The East was also made the locale for several bizarre



at-Trioson, Sketch for The
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political allegories in the Baroque manner, such as Vincent's *Allegory of the Freeing of the Prisoners of Algiers* (1806; Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen) and the *Allegory of the Condition of France before Bonaparte's Return from Egypt* by Joseph Franque (1774–1833) and Jean-Pierre Franque (1774–1860), exhibited at the Salon of 1810 (Paris, Louvre).¹⁰ The best works, after those of Gros, were those by A.-L. Girodet-Trioson (1767–1824), who executed a theatrical and vivid *Revolt of Cairo* (1810, Versailles, fig. 13; sketch, Cleveland Museum of Art, fig. 14). Girodet's portraits of Greeks, Turks, and Indians in authentic costume (*Portrait of an Indian*, 1807, Montargis, Musée Girodet;¹¹ *Bearded Man wearing a Turban*, before 1803, Avignon, Musée Calvet) show this Napoleonic artist's interest in and respect for exotic peoples and cultures.

II DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANTIC ORIENTALISM DURING THE BOURBON RESTORATION (1814-1830)

Fig. 16 (left)
Jules-Robert Auguste, *Seated Turk*, pastel,
1820s. Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

Fig. 15
*Jules-Robert Auguste, *Standing Arab*, 1820s.
Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island
School of Design.



It was the relatively uneventful Restoration, rather than the tumultuous Napoleonic era, that witnessed the rise of the Romantic movement in art. Although Romanticism is notoriously difficult to define, the period was characterized by an intense subjectivism, a looking into the self for inspiration. Leading French artists of earlier periods had concentrated on depicting events of the Bible, Classical history and mythology, or allegories glorifying the reigning monarch. The artists of the Romantic era were freer in depicting their emotions, fantasies, and political beliefs. Many felt a kinship with people of the past, especially the Medieval and Renaissance periods; this led to a wide expansion in the iconography of historical and literary subjects in their paintings. A hedonistic use of color and free, "painterly" brushwork were also considered subjective and a break with the linear style of the preceding period.

The expansion of subject matter was geographical as well as historical, for artists began to look outside Europe for exotic peoples and places to depict in their works. In the late eighteenth century the influential Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other French writers had envisioned the "noble savage," untainted by European civilization and its decadence. The increased interest in exotic countries, particularly the relatively accessible Near East, also contained a strong element of escapism. The ascendancy of Romanticism coincided with the entry of France into the Industrial Revolution. The country was dominated by a wealthy and efficient, yet drab and regimented bourgeois society, from which the more imaginative might well wish to escape to a more sensually gratifying environment. At the same time the naturalistic technique favored by the bourgeois public throughout the nineteenth century was in evidence in much of Romantic painting, and "authentic"—as opposed to fantasy—exoticism soon came to have great prestige. It was from this combination of factors that nineteenth-century documentary Orientalism was born.

In view of the great public enthusiasm for pictures of the Eastern campaigns, it is surprising that French painters did not begin to visit the Orient in significant numbers for almost another generation. In the first years of the Restoration the attention of the French nation turned inward in reaction to recent military disasters. Despite the renewal of freedom of sea travel, France had no major military or economic interests in the Near East at the time, and Napoleonic subjects such as the Egyptian campaign were completely out of favor. Nor was the Orient a focus of political or religious interest at the beginning of the Restoration as it had been in other times.

The only Romantic artist to visit the Near East during the reign of Louis XVIII (1814-1824) was the painter and collector

Jules-Robert Auguste, called Monsieur Auguste (1789–1850).¹ Auguste completed his studies at the French Academy in Rome at the end of 1814, and he is recorded in Paris by October 1817, and again in December 1819. From 1820 to 1822 he lived in London, after which he settled permanently in Paris. The probable period for Auguste's undocumented voyage to the Near East, then, is between 1815 and 1817.

As early as 1824, Auguste already owned a large collection of Oriental art and curiosities that greatly fascinated Delacroix. He passed as an expert on Eastern matters, and was at the center of a salon of Orientalist artists and writers; all of this strongly suggests that Auguste's authority rested on the experience of a trip to the Near East. He had friends who had been to Greece and Constantinople, like the English architect Charles Robert Cockerell, and his ample financial resources would have made such a trip possible.

In his small, brilliantly colored oils and pastels of the 1820s, Auguste often studied bits and pieces of Orientalia, as had Baron Gros. He was particularly interested in ethnographic accuracy, and his work includes many little-known but superb pastel studies of blacks, Arabs, and Turks in costume (figs. 15, 16). In other works he adapted Western examples for Orientalist purposes, transforming Rococo boudoir subjects into suggestive harem scenes (fig. 102); his small *Nubian Girl* in Chicago (fig. 17), one of the few works by the artist in North American public collections, is essentially an adaptation of Delacroix's monumental *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* of 1826 (fig. 20).

Auguste's salon, which met regularly at his home on Saturday evenings during the mid-1820s, was the center for the Parisian artists and writers newly interested in the Near East. Much of this interest stemmed from the great public concern with the war of independence of the Greeks against the Turks, which erupted in 1820 and was waged with considerable ferocity throughout the decade. Auguste invited to his home Greek political refugees² and artists, like Charles-Emile Callande de Champmartin, who were beginning to make the long journey to the Near East.³ Delacroix borrowed frequently from Auguste's store of Orientalia while painting the large *Massacre of Chios* (Paris, Louvre, fig. 23) in 1824, and perhaps copied Indian miniatures belonging to the older artist while preparing *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827; Paris, Louvre, fig. 21; see figs. 24, 25).⁴ The novelist Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), the future author of *Carmen*, in 1825 published a play, *L'Amour africain*, that was set in medieval Moslem Spain. Two years later he published *La Guzla*, a literary fabrication purporting to be an authentic collection of Illyrian folk ballads from the Turkish-controlled Balkans. Both works are

18 (far right)
Eugène Delacroix, *Portrait of a Negro in
Oriental Costume*, c. 1822–23. Buffalo,
Walt-Denning Art Gallery.

Jules-Robert Auguste, *Nubian Girl*, 1820s.
Museum of Art, Institute of Chicago.





ington, *Medora*,
ondon, Wallace Collection.

peppered with bits of Oriental local color that Mérimée gleaned from his friend Auguste.

Prior to 1825, however, Auguste's most important influence as an Orientalist painter was probably on his great contemporary Théodore Géricault (1791–1824). The two artists met either in Rome during Géricault's stay there in 1816–17, or in Paris not long thereafter. They were frequently together during their stay in London, which lasted from about 1820 to 1822. Géricault had acquired from his master, the late Rococo animal painter Carle Vernet, a taste for depicting Mameluke soldiers on horseback and other Oriental costume subjects; like Vernet, he had never visited the Near East. Around 1818 Géricault began to make studies of black models in



erty on the Ruins of
ordeaux, Musée des

preparation for his great canvas *The Raft of the Medusa* (Salon of 1819); the growing naturalism of these works seems to suggest the influence of Auguste's many studies of this kind. The *Portrait of a Negro in Oriental Costume* in Buffalo (fig. 18), though atypically bright in color, is characteristic of Géricault's works of this kind in its forcefulness and close study of the model. Géricault began another series of studies of blacks and Turks around 1822–23, and on his deathbed, when he was no longer able to leave his room, he made copies of Mughal Indian miniatures, again probably borrowed from Auguste.⁵ Géricault's revived interest in Oriental subjects probably was the result of the recent Greek revolt against the Turks, with which Géricault, like his friends Auguste and Delacroix, showed sympathy in works such as the *Scene from the Greek War of Independence* (Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts). The growing Orientalism of Géricault's last years is a striking example of the personal influence of a minor master such as Auguste on a particular aspect of a great artist's career.

Another important artist who was close to Auguste in the 1820s was the English painter Richard Parkes Bonington (1802–1828). Although the contours of Bonington's oeuvre have been obscured by an immense number of imitations, there can be no doubt that this short-lived but prolific artist had a great influence on the leaders of the French Romantic school. Bonington, whose family emigrated to France when the artist was fifteen, entered the atelier of Baron Gros at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1820. Though indifferent to his formal studies, Bonington by the mid-1820s had become friendly with a number of Romantic artists including Delacroix, with whom he shared a studio and traveled in England. Around 1826 he and Auguste had studios in the same building at 11 rue des Martyrs and were on friendly terms.⁶

Bonington's oeuvre consists largely of watercolor views of France and Italy and of historical costume subjects. He influenced the French school, particularly Delacroix, primarily through the richness of his colors and the immediacy of his brushwork; he also helped establish the Romantic vogue for medieval and Renaissance costume pieces. Oriental subjects form a very small proportion of Bonington's work. Although he never traveled further afield than Venice, he seems, like Géricault and Delacroix, to have executed some watercolors inspired by Persian or Indian miniatures (*A Princess and her Attendant*; 1825, London, Wallace Collection). His Oriental genre scenes and literary subjects, such as the *Medora* from Lord Byron's *The Corsair* (1826, Wallace Collection, fig. 19) are most notable for the brilliance and variety of their colors; they are extremely close in style to works of the same period by Auguste and Delacroix, though the



The Death of Sardanapalus,
Paris, Musée du Louvre.

patterns of influence among the three artists are difficult to unravel.

The most familiar, and the greatest, of the Orientalists is Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). Although Delacroix was not, strictly speaking, a specialist in Oriental subjects, works of this kind make up a significant proportion of his oeuvre, and his experience in this genre also had an effect on his approach to religious and literary subject matter. The nature of Delacroix's Orientalism changed considerably over the course of his career, but his interest in the Near East remained consistent throughout his life. Significantly, Delacroix was the first major French artist who, while neglecting the traditional voyage to Italy, did make the pilgrimage to North Africa. Like many other European Orientalists, he never felt the need to repeat his brief voyage, for the hold it retained on his imagination did not weaken.

Delacroix was already drawn to Near Eastern subjects during his adolescence; around 1817 he produced two lithographs, *The Ambassador of Persia* and *The Ambassador of Persia's Favorite Slave*, which have the stiff formality of contemporary Qajar Persian miniatures. During the Restoration, Delacroix's primary contact with Oriental subject matter was through accounts of contemporary military events (the war in Greece), travel books, and imaginative literature. In the latter category pride of place was unquestionably



Delacroix, *The Massacre of Chios*, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

held by the poems of Lord Byron (1788–1824), many of which were set in the Greek or Turkish Orient. Delacroix was already familiar with Byron's *The Giaour* by 1824, and he painted several scenes from the poem during the mid-1820s, including the *Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha* now in Chicago. Delacroix also depicted scenes from Byron's *The Bride of Abydos* in several paintings, the earliest of which dates from 1837 or 1843.⁷

Delacroix's celebrated *Liberty on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (fig. 20) probably alludes to Byron's death in 1824 during the defense of that Greek city. The most important Byronic echo, however, is certainly that in *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827, Paris, Louvre, fig. 21; 1844, Philadelphia, coll. Henry P. McIlhenny, fig. 22), from a stylistic viewpoint the most daring work of Delacroix's career. The subject, the suicide of a defeated Assyrian tyrant who put his entire household to the sword, was probably inspired by Byron's dramatic poem *Sardanapalus* (1821), though the English writer's noble hero is greatly transformed in Delacroix's savage painting. The full range of Delacroix's rich colorism, and that of French Orientalism as a whole, is already evident in this studio production on a traditional historical subject, painted before the artist visited the East. Delacroix was not, however, the first major French artist to explore Byronic Orientalism; Géricault had issued lithographs based on Byron that were known to Delacroix and may have influenced his compositions on the same themes: *The Giaour* (1820), *The Giaour and the Pasha* (1823), and *The Bride of Abydos* (1823). The latter work probably was based on a painting by Géricault that later belonged to the artist's friend General Bro de Commères.⁸

Byron's poetry was by no means the sole source of inspiration for Delacroix's Oriental scenes: His borrowing of Oriental costumes, arms, and other decorative objects from Auguste has already been mentioned. Delacroix's concern for documentation of the East was at its height when he was painting *The Massacre of Chios* (fig. 23) and *The Death of Sardanapalus*. He spoke with people returning from visits to the Orient, and he bought books written by eighteenth-century travelers⁹ and contemporary sets of engravings of Eastern costumes and landscapes, like Antoine Melling's *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* (Paris, 1809–1819).¹⁰

Jottings in Delacroix's sketchbooks reveal that he consulted a great variety of sources in reconstructing the ancient Orient of the *Sardanapalus*: "les types des indiens et leurs monuments, leurs divinités . . . peintures licencieuses de Delhi de Leblond pour les têtes des hommes."¹¹ An oddity of Delacroix's method was that he thought that studying comparatively recent





(left)
miniature, Mughal School, 17th
c., *Portrait of Shah Jahan*. Paris,
Bibliothèque Nationale.



(right)
Delacroix, *Copy of a Portrait of Shah*
Jahan, pencil, 1820s. Paris, Musée du Louvre,
Département des Dessins.

examples of Islamic painting would aid him in depicting his ancient Assyrian theme. Thus, he made studies of Persian miniatures¹² and copied a seventeenth-century Mughal Indian portrait of the emperor Shah Jahan (fig. 24) in a meticulously detailed pencil drawing (fig. 25).¹³ The bearded, benign potentate of the Mughal miniature becomes the prototype for Delacroix's saturnine Assyrian tyrant ("paintings from Delhi for the heads of the men").

It should not be supposed that Delacroix's preoccupation with Persian and Mughal miniatures at this period reflected a genuine interest of the Romantic Orientalists in Near Eastern painting. In a few of his watercolor studies for *The Massacre of Chios*, Delacroix experimented with the flatness and brilliant colors of Persian miniatures.¹⁴ Primarily, however, the Eastern works were for him merely sources of documentary evidence, and the majority of his watercolor copies are relatively free adaptations of the originals. Many years later, in 1850, Delacroix wrote in his *Journal*:

In the evening went to see Mme. Jaubert. Saw portraits and Persian drawings which caused me to repeat what Voltaire says somewhere, more or less like this: There are vast countries

Callande de Champmartin,
The Janissaries, 1827.
 Paris, Musée Municipal.



where taste has never penetrated; they are those countries of the Orient in which there is no society, where women are degraded, etc. All the arts are stationary there.

In these drawings there is neither perspective nor any feeling for what is really painting, that is, a certain illusion of projection. The figures are motionless, the poses awkward, etc.¹⁵

Although Géricault in his last years seems to have appreciated Islamic painting, Delacroix's comments probably reflect the sentiments of most of the Romantics when confronted by art of this kind. A strong creative response to the formal qualities of Islamic painting is not found in French art for nearly another century, until the work of artists such as Matisse.

For the Romantics of the late 1820s, the old methods of documentation of Eastern subjects—reading, questioning travelers, and copying Islamic art and decorative objects—were no longer sufficient. It was at this period that a steady stream of French artists began making the journey to the Near East: Champmartin in 1826, Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps in 1828, Adrien Dauzats in 1829, Prosper Marilhat in 1831. All of these artists directed their attention to the Eastern Mediterranean: the Holy Land, Egypt, and, above all, to Turkey.

The first of these, Charles-Emile Callande de Champmartin (1797–1883), visited Constantinople, Cyprus, and Jerusalem.¹⁶ His stay in the Turkish capital coincided with the Sultan Mahmud II's attack on the Janissaries, a powerful military group. This method of disposing of opposition forces was not unknown in the Ottoman realms: Mehmet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, had eliminated the



Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, *The Night in Smyrna*, c. 1854. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mameluke troops in Cairo in 1811 in a similar fashion. Champmartin made numerous sketches on the scene, and on his return he began work on a large *Massacre of the Janissaries* (Salon of 1827; Rochefort-sur-Mer, Musée Municipal; fig. 26), a confused battle composition in the manner of Baron Gros's *Battle of Aboukir* (fig. 12), but dryer in execution. Delacroix and Prosper Mérimée hastened to Auguste's salon to hear Champmartin recount his adventures.¹⁷ Champmartin's talents, however, were too slight to make him a leader in the budding Orientalist movement, and he soon settled into a conventional career as a portraitist and history painter.

Of much greater significance was the voyage to Turkey of Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps (1803–1860).¹⁸ A prolific painter of history, scenes of French and Italian genre (everyday life), landscapes,



Fig. 28 (left)
*Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, *Job and His Friends*, c. 1853. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Fig. 29 (above)
Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, *Oriental Night Scene*, c. 1836. Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection.

Fig. 30 (right)
*Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, *Interior of a Turkish Café*. Washington, The Phillips Collection.

and hunting and animal scenes, Decamps is best remembered today for his Turkish subjects and his religious pictures in Eastern settings. Of Decamps's journey, which lasted more than a year, Paul Mantz wrote in 1862: "... among the works which have made his glory, almost all have been inspired by the memory of this voyage."¹⁹ Decamps had long been interested in the East, and had executed imaginary scenes of Arab towns as early as 1823. While in Turkey he lived for some time at Smyrna (Izmir), where he set up an improvised studio. Instead of making the on-the-spot pencil or watercolor sketches favored by many of the other Orientalists, Decamps observed the life around him during the day, then attempted to paint his impressions at night in his studio. As Mantz recorded: "... in this course of a year he observed with the glance rather than with the pencil, and it is remarkable that, in effect, among the numerous drawings that remain to us from him, only a few appear to have been made after nature in the Orient."²⁰ This procedure accords well with the deliberate, heavily worked technique characteristic of Decamps's mature style.

Some of Decamps's Turkish pictures are lively genre scenes showing children at play or military patrols making their rounds (*The Night Patrol at Smyrna*, Salon of 1831, London, Wallace Collection, and c. 1854, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; fig. 27). Others are somber landscapes executed in a heavy impasto technique—Decamps's celebrated "cuisine"—which he developed in





Fig. 31

*Prosper Marilhat, *Ruins of the El Hakem Mosque, Cairo*, 1840. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

the 1830s and continued to use throughout his career. His most ambitious pictures, Biblical scenes that aspire to the grand manner of history painting, are set in narrow, shaded streets recalling those of Turkish towns (*Job and his Friends*, c. 1853, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, fig. 28; *The Good Samaritan*, c. 1845, Norfolk, Chrysler Museum, and c. 1853, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). It is in works such as these that Decamps, under the influence of Rembrandt and Poussin, is best able to combine his desire to be a history painter with the reality of his talent as a specialist in genre scenes.

As famous in his own day as Delacroix or Ingres, Decamps is important historically for his painterly technique, which rejected Neoclassical slickness and which is sometimes said to have been an influence on the brushwork of Manet and the Impressionists. The other aspects of his art are less imposing, for his compositions often seem dependent on the late works of Rembrandt, and many of his subjects, such as his pictures of basset hounds and his numerous *singeries*, are repetitious, displaying a banality that often irritated contemporary critics. It is in his Eastern subjects, such as the



ght)
Marilhat, *Caravanserai*. Philadelphia,
Johnson Collection.

rove)
Marilhat, *Beneath the Archway*.
The George A. Lucas Collection,
land Institute College of Art,
Baltimore Museum of Art.

mysterious *Oriental Night Scene* (c. 1836, Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection, fig. 29), that Decamps's imagination is strongest, even though, like Auguste, he never returned to the Near East during the remaining thirty years of his career.

A more direct, though less considered, view of the Orient is found in the works of the short-lived Prosper Marilhat (1811–1847), one of the first artists to specialize in Near Eastern landscape subjects.²¹ In 1831 Marilhat traveled to Egypt as the draftsman for a German scientific expedition led by Baron von Hugel. He visited Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt; the voyage, which lasted two years, was the basis of all his subsequent Orientalist works. Marilhat's landscapes are simple, accurate views, lacking the interest in picturesque anecdote characteristic of much of Decamps's work. Marilhat's most ambitious works, such as the *Ruins of the El Hakem Mosque, Cairo* (1840; Paris, Louvre, fig. 31) have a grandeur appropriate to their imposing subjects. Smaller works like the *Caravanserai* (Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection, fig. 32) are unglamorized but painted in brilliant, steady illumination, as though the East were perpetually bathed in dazzling sunlight. Despite the seeming "objectivity" of his work, Marilhat, in his dependence on forceful contrasts of light and shadow, creates his own exoticism, differentiating his Oriental scenes from views of Europe by technique as well as subject matter.



III EXPANSION DURING THE JULY MONARCHY (1830-1848)

Artists like Decamps, who visited the Near East during the 1820s, actually produced their best Orientalist pictures during the decades that followed. The 1830s and early 1840s were in fact the golden age of French Orientalism: Artists traveled to the East in increasing numbers, returning with bulging sketchbooks that they used for the rest of their careers. Older and more conservative artists, armchair Orientalists, were encouraged to try their hand in this field in view of its growing respectability. The result was the development of such new genres as the Oriental landscape, of which Prosper Marilhat was a distinguished practitioner.

Political events gradually drew artists' attention from the eastern Mediterranean to the south and west. With the end of hostilities between the Greeks and Turks in 1829, an independent Greece moved rapidly toward Westernization under a German ruler. The Egyptian viceroy Mehmet Ali fought several wars during the 1830s against his nominal lord, the Ottoman Turkish sultan, and was recognized as the virtually independent ruler of Egypt in 1840. Still more important was the French invasion of Algeria, begun in 1830 under the last Bourbon king, Charles X, and continued with considerable effort and expense after the revolution of July 1830 by his successor, Louis Philippe (1830-1848). Algeria was transformed from a relative backwater to a major center of French artistic activity; its conquest also created new interest in the culture of neighboring countries, particularly Morocco. The seemingly endless decline of Ottoman Turkey, and the tawdry Westernization of its capital, Constantinople, was another factor in turning the attention of the artist toward the more primitive sights of the North African desert.

Fig. 34 (right)

*Eugène Delacroix, *Six Figures of Arabs*, 1832. New York. The Pierpont Morgan Library.

Figs. 35 and 36 (left)

*Eugène Delacroix, *Two Groups of Arabs*, 1832. New York. The Pierpont Morgan Library.





Delacroix, *Street in Meknes*, 1832.
 Night-Knox Art Gallery.

The initial French invasion of Algeria brought with it a number of artists who reported on the military campaign for an avid public at home. The majority of these were topographical painters or printmakers of negligible talent; it was not until a few years later that battle and landscape painters of real ability attached themselves to the French army in Algeria. As had been the case with the early Orientalism of the 1820s, the highest achievement in the documentary Orientalism of the 1830s was found in the works of Delacroix. His journey to North Africa in 1832 was the most important of all the Orientalist voyages, both in regard to the works produced during the trip and to those subsequently inspired by it. The journey was planned in 1831 and begun at the start of 1832, lasting for six months. Delacroix, who had excellent official connections, was attached to a diplomatic mission sent by the French government to the sultan of Morocco, ruler of the only Arab state that had escaped Turkish domination. This brief "eastern" voyage (Morocco in fact is



*Jewish Wedding in
Paris, Musée du Louvre.*

Meknes, the Moroccan capital, because of the marked hostility of the population toward foreigners. Delacroix usually sketched in pencil, using color notations as an *aide-mémoire*; the intense, high-keyed colors were then often added in the evening, by artificial illumination, while the scene was still fresh in the artist's memory. In the port of Tangier and later, briefly, in southern Spain and Algiers, the atmosphere was more open toward visitors, and Delacroix was able to sketch at greater leisure.

Delacroix was fascinated with everything he saw in Morocco, and in particular with the dignified dress and bearing of the Arab population, rulers and masses alike. Like many escapists of the period, he saw in the Moslem world what he wished to see: The Arab burnoose, for example, was a survival of the dignified Roman toga, making European attire seem pointlessly confining. With a touch of Romantic primitivism he wrote: "They are closer to nature in a thousand ways: their dress, the form of their shoes. And so beauty has a share in everything that they make. As for us, in our corsets, our tight shoes, our ridiculous pinching clothes, we are pitiful . . ." ² He found the strong colors and dazzling light of North Africa equally



Sultan of Morocco
Toulouse, Musée des

impressive, confirming his already pronounced tendency toward colorism and blond tonalities.

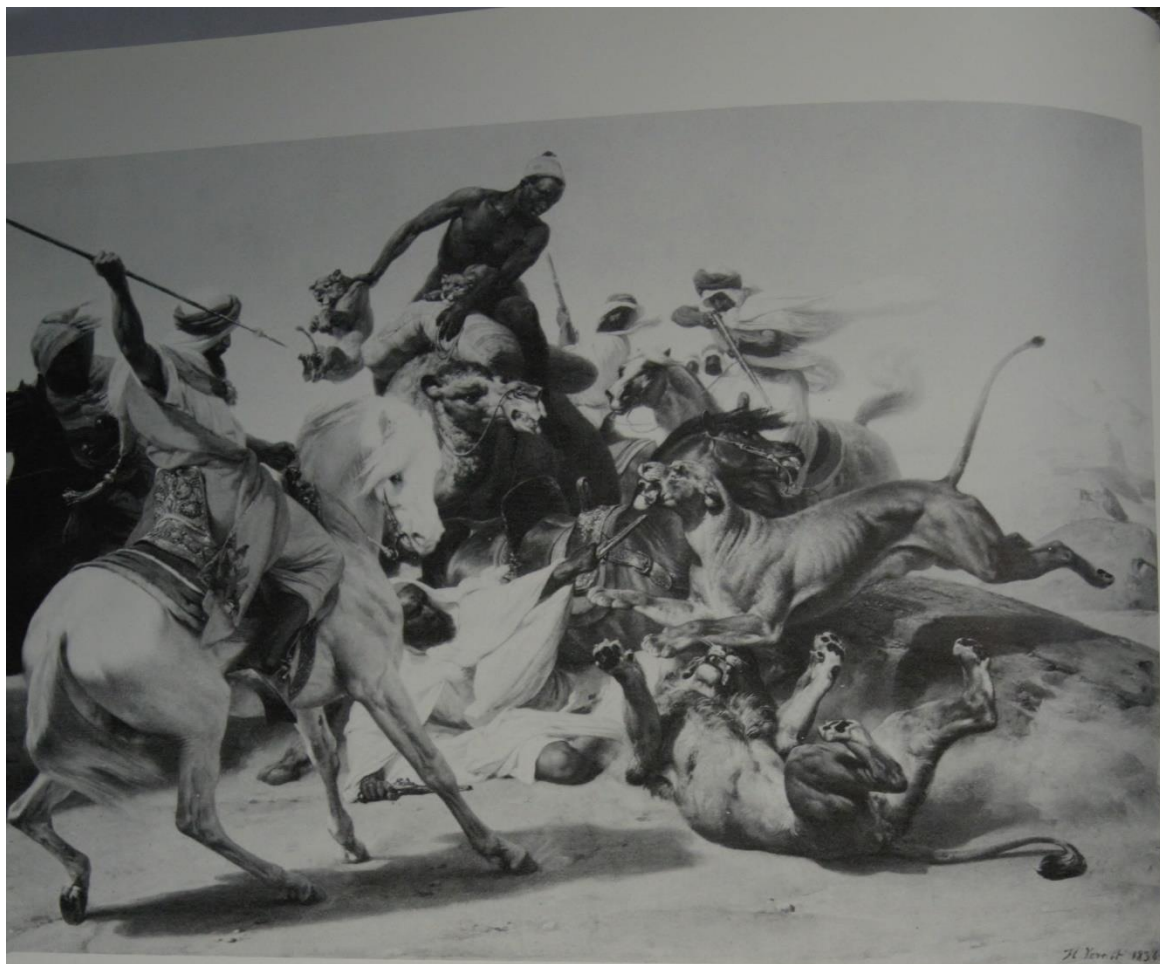
Delacroix's landscape sketches provide the definitive view of the scenery of Morocco, some of which can be seen almost unchanged today: the lush countryside around Tangier, or the formidable seventeenth-century battlements of Meknes. Sketches of individuals in costume were later grouped into compositions after the artist returned to France. His first painting of the journey after his return was the small *Street in Meknes* of 1832, now in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (fig. 37). The woman at the left, like nearly all of the female models available to Delacroix in Morocco, is identified by her costume as Jewish. In the quiet subject, the careful placement of the figures, and the shallow depth of the scene, the picture represents a shift to an extreme pole of classicism in Delacroix's work after the baroque extravagance of the *Death of Sardanapalus*, painted only five years earlier.

The most important painting to come out of the North African journey was the large *Women of Algiers*, shown at the Salon of 1834 (Paris, Louvre, fig. 38). The subject was one that was close to Delacroix's heart, and in the more Westernized atmosphere of Algiers he finally succeeded in gaining entrance to the women's quarters of a Moslem household. In this great painting the subdued classicism of the Buffalo picture is heightened by the massive monumentality of the figures, each of whom seems immersed in her own thoughts. The picture is also remarkable for its uniquely complex colorism that, in its less systematic way, anticipates the researches of Seurat and the Neo-Impressionists. Other major works based on Delacroix's experiences and showing the artist's classicizing bent are the vigorous yet dignified *Jewish Wedding in Morocco* (c. 1839; Paris, Louvre, fig. 39), later copied by Renoir (fig. 144), and the imposing *Sultan of Morocco and his Court*, painted as late as 1845 (Toulouse, Musée des Augustins, fig. 40), much admired by Charles Baudelaire for its subtle colorism:

In spite of the splendor of its hues, this picture is so harmonious that it is gray—as gray as nature, as gray as the summer atmosphere when the sun spreads over each object a sort of twilight film of trembling dust.³

In works like these, Delacroix manages to transcend the everyday nature of his subjects in a manner not equaled by any other European Orientalist. Despite the artist's attention to color and documentary detail, the overall impression is of gravity and timelessness, qualities that in earlier periods were associated largely with religious and historical painting.

Delacroix also observed a Dionysian side of North



Delacroix, *Lion Hunt*, 1836. London, Victoria and Albert Museum collection.

African life, an alternative to the sultan's Apollonian dignity. This is conveyed in the two versions of the *Religious Fanatics of Tangier* (c. 1836–38, Minneapolis Institute of Art, and 1857, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario), and in his pictures of Arab "powder play," or firearms displays on horseback, one of the earliest of which is the *Collision of Arab Horsemen* (1833; Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery). These and many other subjects drawn from his actual experience were added to his Salon submissions of the 1830s and 1840s, outnumbering but not entirely eliminating such Byronic Eastern themes as *The Bride of Abydos* or *The Giaour*. Among such subjects, some of which exist in more than one version, are the *Arab Encampment*, the *Moroccan Caid Visiting a Tribe*, *Arabs Playing Chess*, *Arab Musicians and Jesters*, *Guardhouse at Meknes*, and *Jewish Musicians from Mogador*. Delacroix completely dominated the documentary Orientalism of the 1830s and 1840s, setting a standard of seriousness and authenticity that other artists strove to emulate.

If Morocco remained hostile to painters, the conquest of

Algeria had opened a vast new field of exploration. The first major artist to visit the country after Delacroix was Horace Vernet (1789–1863). Originally a Napoleonic battle painter, Vernet had risen to the pinnacle of official success, and served as director of the French Academy in Rome from 1828 to 1835. He then followed the army to Algeria, participating as closely in the fighting as Baron Gros had in Napoleon's Italian campaigns. For another generation Vernet continued to produce pictures of French victories, all enthusiastically received; of these the most overpowering (and, at a width of more than seventy feet, the largest of all Orientalist pictures) is *The Capture of Abd-el-Kader's Train by the duc d'Aumale* (1845; Versailles, Musée National du Château).

Today Vernet is usually regarded as a facile painter who sacrificed the Romantic originality of his youth for the easy success of an academic technique. Vernet's ease of composition was in fact legendary: A famous print shows him painting calmly in his studio, surrounded by students who sing, carouse, and duel. On the other hand, Vernet showed considerable political independence: He remained openly Bonapartist in his sympathies, even after Napoleon's fall. Even before the Algerian invasion Vernet had treated such subjects of contemporary Islamic history as the *Massacre of the Mamelukes in Cairo*. The Algerian campaign was well suited to his temperament, to his flair for depicting violent action. This talent may

ler, 1856.
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Fig. 45
*Charles Gleyre, *Turkish Lady (Angelica)*,
Smyrna, watercolor, 1834. Boston, Lowell
Trust, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts.

Fig. 46 (far right)
*Charles Gleyre, *Interior of the Palace,*
Karnak, watercolor, 1835. Boston, Lowell
Trust, courtesy Museum of Fine Arts.

longer knows where to go to avoid the society of painters; I find at least a dozen of them here, all bursting with talent by their own account. They have spoiled Cairo for me."⁶

Gleyre and Lowell soon departed on the extended boat trip up the Nile that was to become *de rigueur* for visiting artists and writers. In the Sudan they had a disagreement; Lowell went on alone to India, where he soon died, while Gleyre, depressed and suffering from a variety of ailments, did not return to Cairo for more than a year. After a period of convalescence at Beirut, Gleyre finally returned to Europe at the end of 1837. "I am arriving in a state a thousand times worse than that of the Prodigal Son," he wrote. "You must really expect to greet a man who is morally and physically worn out."⁷

While in Egypt Gleyre had planned ambitious allegorical paintings set in the desert. Later, perhaps as a result of his arduous experiences, he rejected Orientalism as mere genre painting, embracing instead a classicizing academic style. His large *Evening* (Louvre), also known as *Lost Illusions*, which caused a sensation at the Salon of 1843 and made his reputation, was based on a memory of the Nile; the source is no longer recognizable, however, for the figure of the artist has been transformed into that of a discouraged Greek bard watching a boat filled with Classical nymphs. Gleyre's Orientalist achievement lies in his fine watercolors of Greece, Turkey, and Egypt, executed between 1834 and 1837. Many of these were claimed by Lowell as part of his agreement with the artist, and have found their way to America (Boston, Lowell Trust, on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, figs. 45–47). Clearly organized, rational, and realistic, the watercolors are a model of the record of the Near East that many of the Orientalists sought to bring back with them; the strong light and color of northern Africa are as evident here as in the works of Marilhat or Delacroix.

Not every painter in search of Oriental subjects was willing to endure the hardships of battle, like Vernet, to face a hostile populace, like Delacroix, or to live in a disease-ridden backwater, like Gleyre. Many artists, swept up in the popular enthusiasm for Oriental subjects, preferred to travel to the East through their imagination alone. These studio Orientalists differed from their Rococo precursors such as Van Loo in their willingness to strive for convincingly authentic detail, at least in the decor and subordinate figures.

The most distinguished of these Oriental fantasists was the celebrated Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), Delacroix's arch-rival and the chief heir of the Neoclassical school of David. Ingres thought of himself as a history painter, though contemporary taste generally prefers his portraits in oil or pencil to his historical works. His production, nevertheless, was extremely diverse



Fig. 47
Charles Gleyre, *Jewish Woman of Smyrna*,
watercolor, 1834. Boston, Lowell Trust,
courtesy Museum of Fine Arts.

Fig. 48 (far right, above)
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Great
Odalisque*, 1814. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 49 (far right, below)
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Odalisque
in Grisaille*, c. 1813-14. New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

and included a number of ambitious Orientalist paintings; these works differed from their Romantic counterparts in their precise technique, but not in their sensual, escapist subject matter.

As early as 1814 Ingres was executing a commission for Caroline Murat, Queen of Naples, for a large picture of a harem girl, the so-called *Great Odalisque* (Paris, Louvre, fig. 48; preliminary version in grisaille, c. 1813-14, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 49). The picture was intended as a pendant for a painting of 1808 (now lost) by Ingres, the *Sleeping Woman of Naples*; the New York version, an elegant but unadorned picture of an impossibly elongated European nude, may represent Ingres's original concept.⁸ In the final version, the artist transformed the nude into a specifically Oriental subject by the addition of a few accessories: a multicolored headdress, a peacock feather fan, a nargile, and a Turkish incense burner. For Ingres the odalisque theme was a pretext for dealing with the female nude, and he returned to it several times during his long career. In 1828, he painted a small harem scene, the *Bather: Interior of a Harem* (Paris, Louvre); the principal figure was a repetition of his *Valpignon Bather* of 1808, but among the subsidiary figures he attempted to introduce such exotic details as the voluptuous nude bather and turbaned servants. Another small painting, perhaps begun in 1826, repeats this composition in an outdoor setting (Washington, Phillips Collection, fig. 50).

Ingres's most completely realized Orientalist genre painting is the *Odalisque and Slave* (panel, 1839; Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art, fig. 51; canvas, 1842, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery). The subject of a reclining nude with a musician—much beloved by Venetian painters of the Renaissance—shows Ingres characteristically referring to an historically authoritative precedent, even when executing a small Orientalist genre painting. The Baltimore version—in his old age Ingres frequently repeated earlier compositions—differs from the Fogg panel in many small details, notably in the floor design and the opening of the background into a garden setting. The hard, brilliant local colors of this composition are in complete contrast to the painterly colorism of Delacroix's second *Sardanapalus* (fig. 22), which was painted at approximately the same time. The principal figure, which may be based on Ingres's lost *Sleeping Woman of Naples* of 1808,⁹ differs from the *Great Odalisque* in the more direct eroticism of her pose, but the principal new element is the artist's attention to details of the "authentic" decor. Ingres's remarkable draftsmanship indeed seems to run riot here, diffusing the viewer's attention by lingering excessively on so many lovingly delineated pieces of Orientalia. The picture demonstrates that an artist with strong powers of visualization and access to Near





fig. 51
 Ingres, Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Odalisque and Slave*, 1839. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art.

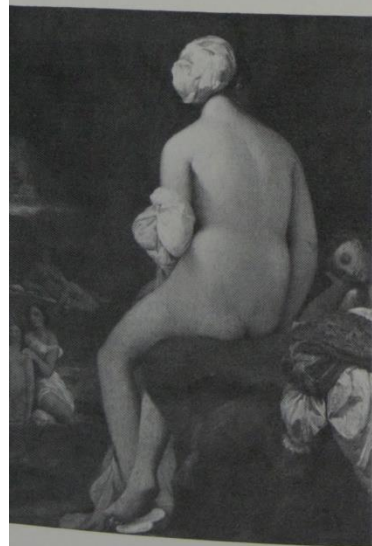
Eastern costumes and decorative objects could successfully practice the Orientalist genre without ever leaving Paris or Rome.

All of Ingres's studies of bathers and odalisques were eventually synthesized into one great picture, the *Turkish Bath*, which the octogenarian painter signed in 1862 (Paris, Louvre, fig. 52). Here the Oriental accessories that occupied such a prominent place in the *Odalisque and Slave* are largely ignored, and the picture space is filled with an extraordinary profusion of female nudes. In the complete concentration on the human form, the crowded frieze of nudes across the background, and the tondo format the painting recalls certain Central Italian religious pictures of the Renaissance, particularly Luca Signorelli's *Madonna and Child* and Michelangelo's *Doni Holy Family* (both Florence, Uffizi), though the subject matter could scarcely be more different. Ingres's veneration of the female form here receives its definitive statement in the guise of an Oriental



fig. 52 (right)
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Turkish Bath*, 1862. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

fig. 50
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Bather*, c. 1806. Washington, The Phillips Collection.



picture. The artist's method of visualizing his ostensible subject, a harem interior, is highly subjective, and will be discussed further in the examination of Orientalist subject categories in Chapter V.

Other studio-bound painters managed to deal with Oriental subjects with considerable charm, if not with the degree of conviction shown by Ingres in the *Odalisque and Slave*. Among the most entertaining was Narcisse Diaz (1807–1876), who from time to time left his Barbizon landscapes to paint fanciful depictions of Oriental women. The large, colorful *Dance of the Almahs* (1862; Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection, fig. 53), is a delightful example of Diaz's work in this genre. Compared to Delacroix's Moroccan and Algerian women, these dancing girls are as insubstantial as a dream. Diaz is usually classed as a realist in his landscape paintings, but he was clearly a Romantic in his treatment of Oriental themes. Through the Rococo revival that was a subcurrent of Romanticism, his almahs are descended from the imaginary sultanas of eighteenth-century French *turqueries*. Diaz's exotic women, whether called Turks, Arabs, or Gypsies, all have a close family relationship, for they are all purely creations of the artist's

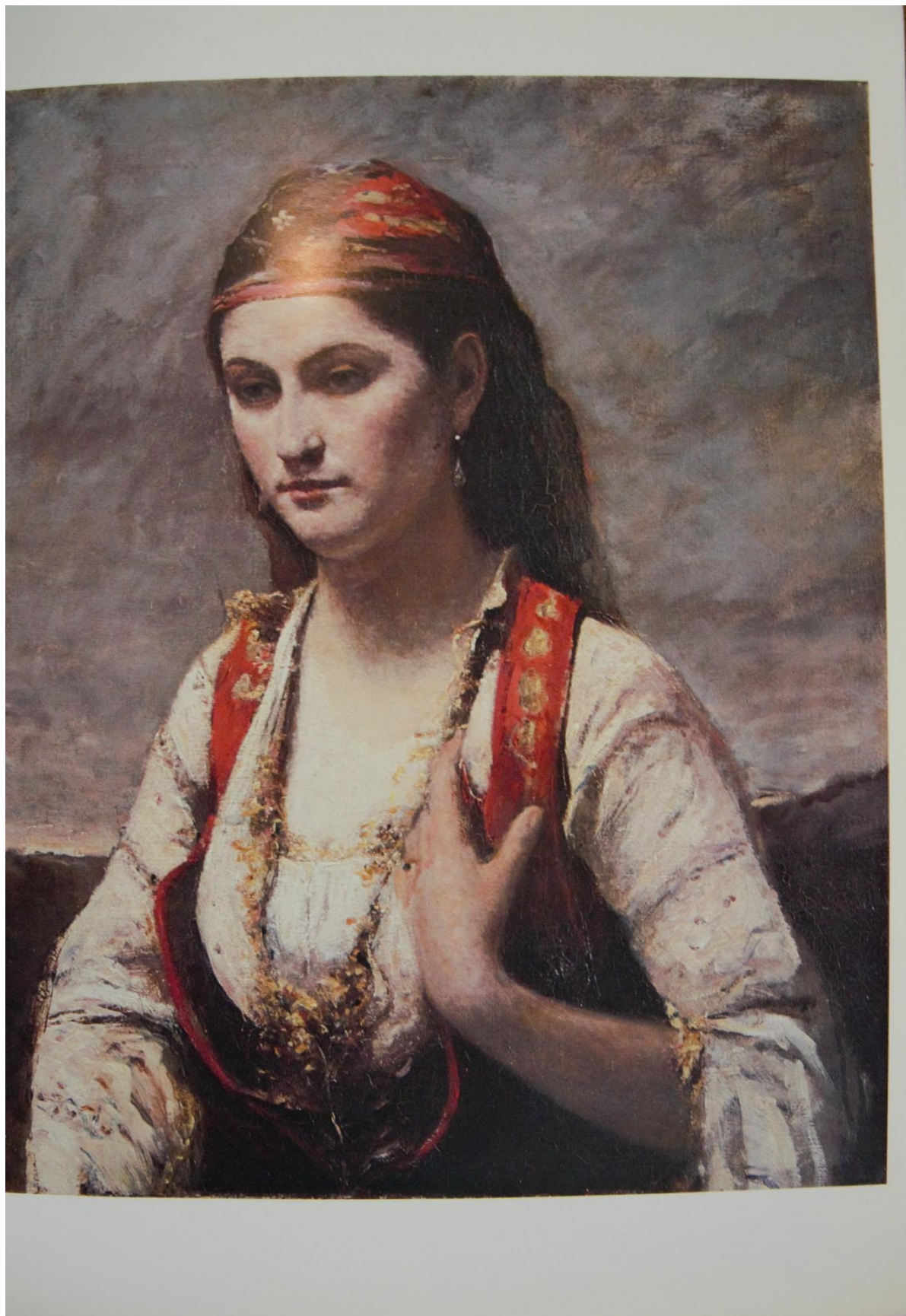


ssé Diaz, *Dance of the Almahs*, 1862.
Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection.

(far right)
Camille Corot, *Albanian Woman*, 1872. The
Metropolitan Museum.

imagination. Their purpose is not to stimulate thought, but to give pleasure. Diaz had a great influence on younger artists who were more drawn to subjective than to documentary themes, particularly Adolphe Monticelli and, through him, on some of the Symbolist artists of the *fin de siècle*, like Odilon Redon.

Among the older artists of the Romantic generation who occasionally tried their hand at the Orientalist genre was one of the most distinguished, the landscape painter Camille Corot (1796–1875). Corot's landscapes were always based on a close study of nature, and he largely restricted himself to familiar views of France and Italy. In addition to his landscapes Corot, from his youthful days in Italy, had painted figure studies, particularly single figures of female models in costume. From Italian peasants it was only a step to painting odalisques, though most of these works belong to the last years of his life. The small, colorful, freely painted *Young Algerian Woman Lying on the Grass* (c. 1871–73, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, fig. 55) could fit in easily with the Romantic studio odalisques painted in the 1820s by



Auguste and Delacroix. The many other works of this kind from the last decade of Corot's life include: *Gypsy Girl at the Fountain* (c. 1865–1870; Philadelphia Museum of Art), *Greek Girl* (c. 1868–70; New York, coll. Dr. and Mrs. Rudolf J. Heinemann), and the *Albanian Woman* (1872; Brooklyn Museum, fig. 56), with its great attention to volumetric solidity, as well as odalisques, Jewish women of Algiers, etc. In another bit of fancy, Corot depicted a friend, the painter Ernest Dumax, in Arab attire (formerly New York, Wildenstein and Co.); this seems a throwback to the practices of Rococo Orientalists like Liotard, who made a portrait of the Countess of Coventry dressed in Turkish finery (fig. 7). The success of the harem figures of Ingres, Diaz, and Corot shows the domestication of such subject matter in the work of artists who were too aged or infirm to travel adventurously.

Even among the relatively small, privileged group of artists who traveled to the Near East during the first half of the nineteenth century, not all were able to shake off the influence of their traditional training and experience in response to the new colors, sights, and peoples of the Orient. A good example of this persistence of an artist's European background is seen in the work of one of the most gifted Orientalists, Théodore Chassériau (1819–1856). A precocious student of Ingres who became an impassioned admirer of Delacroix, Chassériau is sometimes described as having reconciled the styles of the two great masters of line and color. Nothing quite this schematic occurs, however, in the work of Chassériau, who brought a unique sensibility to his Orientalist works.¹⁰

Much nonsense has been written about the "innate exoticism" of Chassériau, who was born at El Limón, Santo Domingo. In fact, the artist was brought to France at the age of three and received a typical bourgeois upbringing. He became best known for a series of monumental religious and allegorical paintings for public buildings in Paris, particularly the staircase of the Cour des Comptes (1844–48, largely destroyed 1871) and the baptismal chapel of the Church of Saint-Roch (1853–54). From the beginning of his career, however, Chassériau produced Biblical subjects, usually erotic in nature, with Orientalizing details. Examples include the *Susanna at the Bath* (1839; Paris, Louvre), a sensuous nude already in Chassériau's fully developed style, but with Oriental details of headdress, veils, and jewelry; and the *Esther Preparing to Present Herself before Ahasuerus* (1841; Louvre, fig. 57), which contrasts a nude white figure with two black servants, as had been done a generation earlier by Monsieur Auguste.¹¹

In 1845 Chassériau was commissioned to produce a large equestrian picture of *Ali ben Hamed, Caliph of Constantine, Followed by his Escort* (Versailles, Musée National du Château, fig.

58); this fine work, which inevitably recalls Delacroix's contemporary *Sultan of Morocco and His Court* (fig. 40) but is far more detailed and portraitlike, led to an invitation from the Algerian chieftain to visit his stronghold of Constantine. Chassériau spent two months in Algeria in 1846, a relatively short sojourn that nevertheless affected the content of his work profoundly. He sketched and wrote tirelessly; like Delacroix, he found that he gained entry more easily to Jewish than to Moslem households, and most of his subsequent genre pictures of female subjects reflect this experience.

Some of Chassériau's surviving drawings made in Algeria display extremely close attention to exotic detail, and particularly to the greater variety of peoples in North Africa, as in several studies of Negro musicians. The principal result of the trip was *The Sabbath Day in the Jewish Quarter of Constantine*, an enormous canvas (625 by 700 cm.) that was destroyed in a fire before any record was made of it.¹² The painting was refused at the Salon of 1847 but shown at that of

a Turkish Garden. Boston,
arts.



Algerian Woman Lying
3. Amsterdam,

Esther Preparing to
Ahasuerus, 1841. Paris,



1848, when it was hailed enthusiastically by the influential Romantic critic Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), one of Chassériau's most ardent admirers. A preliminary drawing in the Louvre may record the composition: Ranks of figures, undoubtedly of life size, were seated in a courtyard or before a massive architectural background.¹³ Gautier's fulsome description praises the originality of the female figures, the authenticity of their clothing and cosmetics, and the more brilliant colors and freer brushwork the former *Ingriste* used to depict them.¹⁴ It is unfortunate that this great document of Chassériau's first response to North Africa has been lost; he was by nature a painter of vast decorative compositions, and the opportunity provided by this project was not repeated.

After the *Sabbath Day* the Cour des Comptes project intervened, and Chassériau did not return to Orientalist subjects until 1849. By then several years had passed since his brief Algerian adventure; he painted some small pictures of domestic life (*Two Jewish Women of Constantine Rocking a Cradle*, 1851, Toronto, coll. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Tanenbaum, fig. 59), and a number of seraglio fantasy scenes depicting beautiful odalisques emerging from the bath or accompanied by their servants. He used Parisian models for his odalisques, and these paintings, which were not exhibited during Chassériau's lifetime, display an unresolved tension between the idealized European models and the exotic subordinate figures and decor. Chassériau was more successful in depicting North African life in several large, multifigure canvases of male subjects: the *Chiefs Visiting a Tribe* (1849; Louvre), a subject already treated in 1838 by Delacroix; the vigorous, if slightly theatrical *Arab Chieftains*



Fig. 58
Théodore Chassériau, *Ali ben Hamed, Caliph of Constantine, Followed by his Escort*, 1845.
Versailles, Musée National du Château.

Fig. 59 (far right)
*Théodore Chassériau, *Two Jewish Women of Constantine, Algeria Rocking a Cradle*, 1851. Toronto, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Tanenbaum.

Challenging Each Other to Single Combat (Salon of 1852; Louvre), surely related to Delacroix's *The Giaour and the Pasha; Arab Horsemen in Combat*, (1853, Northampton, Mass., Smith College Museum of Art, fig. 60); and in particular the somber and imposing *Arab Horsemen Carrying Away Their Dead* (Salon of 1850–51; Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art, fig. 61). In these works ethnographic detail is subordinated to a serious, even pessimistic view of life not unlike that seen in some of Delacroix's best Moroccan pictures.

Like other artists with large pictorial repertoires, Chassériau allowed his Oriental experience to color his treatment of religious and literary subjects. In his large mural of *St. Phillip Baptizing the Eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia* for the baptismal chapel, Saint-Roch, Paris (1853), Chassériau enthusiastically introduced exotic physiognomies and glittering trappings for nearly all figures except that of the saint. Chassériau's etched illustrations to Shakespeare's *Othello*, published in 1844 before his trip to Algeria, emphasize the Moor's exotic appearance.¹⁵ In a series of paintings of Desdemona, executed in 1849, Chassériau again contrasts the porcelain features of the central figure with the darker, seemingly black servant woman, as in his seraglio scenes.

Chassériau's career was cut short by his death in 1856, but his style, which was established very early, does not seem to have changed greatly in his maturity. Despite some tendencies toward ethnographic documentation, he was essentially a Romantic in the manner of Auguste or Diaz, frequently imposing his own fantasies of Oriental life upon what he knew to be the realities of North African culture. Chassériau's early training under Ingres established in him a stylistic tendency toward classicizing idealization of his models that was overcome only briefly, if at all, by his firsthand experience of exotic ethnic types in Algeria. Chassériau's idol Delacroix could find the classical ideal in the Moslem and Jewish culture of North Africa, which he took to be a survival from antique times; he was thus able to balance authenticity of ethnographic detail with the elevated style of the European grand manner, of which he was one of the last practitioners. For Chassériau, however, the ideal—at least as far as feminine beauty was concerned—remained in Europe. Despite his travel experience, with its benefits for his use of color and painterly technique, his works convey only a deeply personal, if distinguished, image of fantasy Orientalism.



Fig. 60 (below)
 *Théodore Chassériau, *Arab Horsemen in Combat*, 1853. Northampton, Mass., Smith College Museum of Art.

Fig. 61 (above)
 Théodore Chassériau, *Arab Horsemen Carrying Away their Dead*, Salon of 1850-51. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art.



IV THE SECOND EMPIRE (1852-1870): THE APOGEE OF ORIENTALIST REALISM

Before discussing the rise of the younger generation of realists, we should examine the last years of the most important of the Romantic Orientalists, Eugène Delacroix. In the 1850s Oriental subjects continued to form a significant, even increasing, proportion of Delacroix's oeuvre, though by no means outnumbering his varied production of historical and literary subjects, landscapes, animal paintings, and still life. Nevertheless, as the memories of his actual experiences in North Africa inevitably grew more distant with the passage of time, Delacroix developed a new attitude toward his Oriental material. By the time he painted the second *Women of Algiers* (1849; Montpellier, Musée Fabre, fig. 62) the image, compared to the larger first version (fig. 38) was less direct and detailed, more atmospheric and nostalgic, as though a barrier of time had come between the artist and his subject. This more reflective view, accompanied by a simplification and sharpening of the color harmonies, takes on the quality, in regard to Delacroix's Oriental works, of an authentic old-age style.

Some works painted not long after Delacroix's return from Morocco in 1832 already had a stately, nostalgic air, as in the *Moroccan Caid Visiting a Tribe*. A quarter-century later this nostalgia had increased noticeably in such lyrical works as *The Banks of the River Sebou*, *The Coast of Morocco near Tangier* (both 1858, Minneapolis Institute of Arts) and the two versions of *Arabs Bathing Horses in the Sea* (1857; 1860, Washington, The Phillips Collection). All of these works are probably based on Delacroix's actual

Fig. 62
Eugène Delacroix, *Women of Algiers*, 1849.
Montpellier, Musée Fabre.





Fig. 64
Eugène Delacroix, *Turkish Women Bathing*,
1854. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum.

observations during the Moroccan journey, though at times elements of fantasy mingle with remembered experiences. An example is the fine, late *Horses at the Fountain* (1862; Philadelphia Museum of Art, fig. 63), with its rich colors and air of subdued reflection. The rural fountain at which the horses are watered may correspond to something Delacroix had seen during the journey from Tangier to Meknes, but the Moorish tower in the background at left is more likely a reminiscence of a major urban monument like the Giralda of Seville, which Delacroix knew from his trip to Spain. At the same time, isolated motifs from North Africa make their appearance in some of the artist's religious, historical, and literary pictures. The massive walls of Meknes, for example, seen in the background of *The Sultan of Morocco Surrounded by his Court* (fig. 40) and still substantially intact today, influence Delacroix's conception for the ancient and medieval fortresses depicted in the *Holy Women*

ght)
Delacroix, *Lion Hunt*, 1858. Boston,
of Fine Arts.

ouis Barye, *Arab Lion Hunt*,
1836-38. Baltimore, Walters Art



Tending the Body of St. Stephen (1853; Arras, Musée Municipal) and *The Abduction of Rebecca*, from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (first version 1846; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).

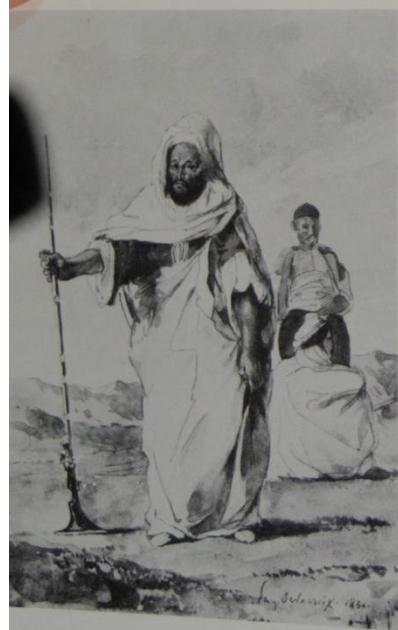
During the last decade of his life Delacroix also returned to making the fantasy pictures of odalisques he, like other Romantics, had painted in his youth in the 1820s. The finest of these works is the so-called *Turkish Women Bathing* (1854; Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum, fig. 64). The headdresses and armlets of the women identify them as Oriental, but the picture is based not on Delacroix's travel experiences but on the work of other artists. The picture, to which Delacroix referred only as his "Bathers," has nothing to do with Turkey, recalling instead Rococo bather scenes; the stone sculpture seen in the background with its back to the principal figures is a device used by Watteau. The work was probably inspired by Gustave Courbet's *Bather*, shown at the Salon of 1853, which Delacroix had found forceful but lacking in accord between the principal figure and the background.¹ The artist's concerns in the *Turkish Women Bathing* are essentially formal, particularly his pre-Impressionist interest in recording fugitive effects of light.

In addition to depicting odalisques or peaceful scenes of North African life, some of Delacroix's late works contain an element of violence corresponding little, or not at all, to the artist's actual experiences. This is particularly true of his scenes of combat between men and wild animals, the earliest of which, the *Arab Horseman Attacked by a Lion* (Art Institute of Chicago) was painted

fig. 67 (right)
 Eugène Delacroix, *Arabian Horses Fighting in a Stable*, 1860. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

fig. 68 (far right)
 Eugène Delacroix, *Arabs Skirmishing in the Mountains*, 1863. Washington, National Gallery of Art.

fig. 69A
 Eugène Delacroix, *Moroccan Chief with Attendants*, watercolor, 1854. Anonymous



in 1849. By the mid-1850s Delacroix had become preoccupied with this theme, painting, among others, such works as the *Tiger Hunt* (1854; Paris, Louvre) and, in particular, the large *Lion Hunt* (1855, partially destroyed 1870; Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts; copy by Pierre Andrieu, Art Institute of Chicago). Constantly striving to improve his mastery of this genre, he repeated the *Lion Hunt* in smaller versions in 1858 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, fig. 65) and 1861 (Art Institute of Chicago).

In works of this kind, Delacroix clearly is inspired by earlier art, particularly the exuberant hunt scenes of Rubens. He made a partial copy of the Flemish master's *Wolf Hunt*, and knew and discussed in his *Journal* the engravings by Pieter Claesz Soutman after other hunt scenes by Rubens.² The genre of fanciful Oriental hunt pieces had never entirely died out, having been practiced in France during the Rococo, and by such Romantics as Géricault and Horace Vernet (fig. 41). Delacroix also probably knew the splendid set of hunt scenes cast by the great animal sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye in 1836–38, now in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (fig. 66). Delacroix, who painted wild animals throughout his career, had visited the menageries at Saint-Cloud with Barye in 1828,³ and was undoubtedly familiar with the sculptor's work. The three compositions of the *Lion Hunt* represent his attempt to clarify the action of Rubens's hunt pictures, which he found to be overcrowded with incident and detail. The intense reds and greens of Delacroix's



Fig. 69

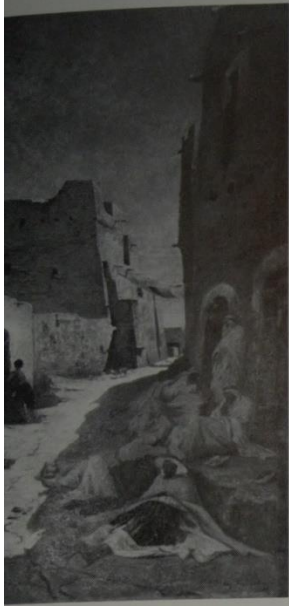
*Eugène Fromentin, *An Encampment in the Atlas Mountains*. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.

late style are wholly appropriate to the violent emotions of the scene.

Delacroix's *Arabian Horses Fighting in a Stable* (1860; Louvre, 1832, fig. 67) may be based in part on his experience of seeing horses fighting during a "powder play" in Morocco. On January 29, 1832, he had written:

From the start, they reared and fought with a ferocity which made me tremble for those gentlemen, but which was really admirable for painting. I saw there, I am sure, the most fantastic and graceful movements that Gros and Rubens could have imagined.⁴

Again the example of earlier art mingled with his reminiscences; besides the works of Gros and Rubens, he knew and in this composition was influenced by Géricault's *Two Horses Fighting in a Stable*, a lithograph published in 1818.⁵ The artist's decision to place such violent scenes in North Africa echoes his belief that there man was closer to nature both in its beneficent aspects, as in the green



Fromentin, *The Street of El Aghouat*, Salon of 1859. Musée de la Chartreuse.

Moroccan hills and rivers, and in its savage, destructive side.

Scenes of fighting among men in an exotic setting were another part of Delacroix's repertory of subjects that did not derive from his own experience, for in 1832 the sultan's forces had Morocco under firm control. Such works of the early 1850s as the *Crouching Arab with a Rifle* and *African Pirates Kidnapping a Young Woman*⁶ are a continuation of Delacroix's series of imaginary scenes of warfare, beginning with the battles of the Greeks and Turks in the 1820s. One of Delacroix's last pictures was the *Arabs Skirmishing in the Mountains* (1863; Washington, National Gallery of Art, fig. 68). Lee Johnson believes this picture illustrates an unrecorded conversation between Delacroix and one of the sultan's ministers, who had spoken of facilitating "the imposition of taxes and the arrest of the seditious."⁷ Whether or not it was actually described to Delacroix, the scene, which he did not witness, exerted a powerful hold on his imagination. At the end of his career Delacroix, like so many other artists, depicted a fantasy Orient, though one imbued with his strongly felt memories of North Africa and belief in the grandeur of its landscape and people.

By the 1850s Algerian resistance had largely been subdued, and the many French artists who went to Algeria observed a conquered colony. The epic gestures and picturesque customs recorded by Romantic artists of the 1830s and 1840s no longer seemed appropriate; instead many painters began to study the everyday life of the colony. Just as many artists in France were turning toward a more restricted range of colors, those visiting North Africa began to see in it something more than a colorful backdrop. They saw the intense light that drains the color out of a landscape, producing the rich gray that already impressed Baudelaire in 1845 in Delacroix's *Sultan of Morocco and his Court*. The pacified and pastoral quality of this changed Algeria appealed to some of the younger artists of the 1850s, for whom painting scenes of everyday life was beginning to challenge the traditional predominance of history painting, with its more histrionic emphasis. At the same time the light of the North African desert encouraged the use of blond tonalities, largely replacing the Rembrandtesque chiaroscuro favored by some earlier Orientalists such as Decamps.

The ideal interpreter of this less heroic Algeria was the painter and writer Eugène Fromentin (1820–1876). A highly educated intellectual, Fromentin took a law degree in 1843 and seems to have contemplated a literary career. He turned rather belatedly to the study of painting; at this period his most admired models were Delacroix, Marilhat, and in particular Decamps, whose use of heavy



impasto influenced Fromentin's early technique. In 1846, at the same time as Chassériau, he visited Algeria briefly, returning for extended visits in 1847–48 and 1852–53. Fromentin was thus, among all the French Orientalists, one of those most familiar with North Africa, both in its picturesque ceremonies and in the routine of its daily life. Characteristically for the period, however, Fromentin never returned thereafter to Algeria, though in 1869 he did make a quick visit to Egypt for the opening of the Suez Canal.

Fromentin made his debut at the Salon of 1847, showing two Algerian scenes; he entered several more in 1849, and exhibited regularly in the following years. Fromentin's combination of artistic and literary talent—a trait that he shared with Delacroix⁸ and Dauzats—was most unusual, reviving a tradition that had rarely been in evidence among Western artists since the Italian Renaissance. The Algerian experience resulted in two carefully worked travel books: *Un été dans le Sahara*, published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1854 and as a book in 1857, and *Une année dans le Sahel*, which appeared in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes* (1858) and as a book in 1859. The two volumes complement each other in their depiction of the parched, severe, economically stagnant south of Algeria and the green, cloudy, more populous north. Fromentin's careful landscape descriptions and accounts of an isolated and apathetic rural population prepare us for the vision of Algeria seen in many of his paintings.

Although he attained great popularity with conservative French and American collectors, Fromentin, who was also a gifted novelist and art critic, seems to have been conscious of the deficiencies in his largely self-taught painting technique. In the preface to the third edition of *Un été dans le Sahara* (1874), he



Fig. 72
 *Léon Belly, *Pilgrims Going to Mecca*, 1861.
 Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

described his decision to publish an account of the desert: "Neither the abundance, not the vividness, nor the intimacy of my memories suited the poor means of rendering at my disposal. It was then that the insufficiency of my calling warned me to look for another as an expedient, and that the difficulty of painting with the brush made me attempt to do so with the pen."⁹ Fromentin's biographer, Louis Gonse, agreed with the painter's self-assessment: "In judging him, let us not forget . . . that he was first of all a literary man, and in him the literary man has surpassed the painter to the very end by his absolute value."¹⁰

Despite the virtuosity of their drawing, Fromentin's paintings often are marred by a dryness and lack of compositional focus not evident in the works of earlier Orientalist draftsmen like Marilhat. Many of his paintings depict relatively small figures of horsemen in grand, barren landscapes; the figures often are not rendered with the same conviction as the background, creating a lack of unity in the composition. It is as if Fromentin's pencil sketches, unlike his literary notes, were insufficient to create a strong image in



Fig. 73
Alfred Dehodencq, *Jewish Festival at Tangier*, Salon of 1870. Poitiers, Musée.

his mind when he came to develop his Orientalist canvases at his studio in France. Gonse, discussing this dichotomy in the artist's work, suggests that Fromentin learned to be a landscapist by studying nature, but lacked sufficient studio training to become equally proficient in painting the human figure.¹¹

A prolific, stylistically consistent artist who limited himself to Orientalist subjects to a much greater extent than Delacroix or Chassériau, Fromentin gives the impression of repeating himself in a small repertory of motifs. Like the Barbizon painters and many Orientalists of his time, Fromentin was greatly concerned with the problem of depicting accurately the fugitive effects of natural light and color, a central issue in nineteenth-century French avant-garde painting from Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* to Seurat's *Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. We should remember, nevertheless, that Fromentin and his Orientalist colleagues were not *plein-air* painters, and that most of his scenes of desert life were composed in the studio many years after his return to Paris. The much-discussed gray of the North African light becomes conventional in the artist's late works. He sought to imitate the delicate halftones of Corot's landscapes, without attaining that artist's magical atmospheric subtlety.

Fromentin as a painter is at his best in works like the *Encampment in the Atlas Mountains* (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, fig. 69), in which figures and background are brought more fully into balance, and in pure landscapes like the small *View of the Nile* (Paris, Louvre). His studies of individual figures, like the late sketch of Arabs in the Ackland Art Center, although not intended for exhibition, are often more fully realized than his finished works. In a townscape like *The Street of Bab-el-Ghardi, El Aghouat* (Salon of 1859; Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse, fig. 70) he conveys the stifling heat of summer in a Saharan oasis with a veracity approaching that of his verbal descriptions in *Un été dans le Sahara*. Less successful are his occasional attempts at drama in paintings like *The Land of Thirst* (Louvre) which, to contemporary eyes, seem marred by overstatement.

Fromentin's tremendous reputation as an Orientalist is difficult to explain today. His literary talents may have had some effect on the evaluation of his paintings by his contemporaries, for in nineteenth-century Paris most art criticism was written by professional men of letters. In his attempt at classical balance of color and line, his striving for nobility of subject, and his avoidance of violent action, Fromentin seems to introduce a kind of *juste milieu* into the colorful conventions of French Orientalist painting. The sordid poverty of life in Saharan towns, which he described

Dehodencq, *Jewish Woman Wearing*
la, black chalk, pastel and
or. New York, Martin L. H. Reymert.



unflinchingly in his travel writings, does not make its appearance in his paintings. Ennobled, idealized, and made interchangeable, the Arabs of Fromentin's later paintings finally lose their vitality and interest. His work nevertheless is significant for a period when many artists were becoming aware of the limitations of picturesque exoticism and were seeking to express something more solid and enduring. He had a great influence on some members of the younger generation of Orientalists, particularly on the expatriate German painter Adolf Schreyer.

The growing objectivity in the treatment of Near Eastern subjects evident in the works of mid-century realists like Fromentin was associated with an increase in the size and complexity of many compositions. In ambitiousness and technical competence, the Orientalist Salon "machines" of the period rival any contemporary works by academicians working with more traditional subjects. A good example is the *Pilgrims Going to Mecca* (1861; Paris, Musée d'Orsay, fig. 72) by Léon Belly (1827–1877), a disciple of the Barbizon



landscape painters Constant Troyon and Théodore Rousseau, who was also a frequent traveler to the Near East.¹² An artist might spend several years preparing a work of this scale, producing hundreds of preparatory sketches in the process. This tremendous investment of time and effort was made only in part to achieve a success at the Salon: Artists like Belly were genuinely obsessed with the problems of exact reproduction of ethnic type, costume, light and atmosphere, problems which they regarded as central to the modern artistic endeavor.

Among Fromentin's contemporaries were also many artists who, like the short-lived Chassériau, continued the tradition of Romantic Orientalist colorism begun by Gros and Delacroix. One of these, an artist who painted with more vigor—if less taste—than Fromentin, was Alfred Dehodencq (1822–1882).¹³ Wounded in the revolution of 1848, Dehodencq traveled to Spain, where he married and established a family. By 1853 he was in Morocco, and beginning in 1854 he spent part of each year in Tangier, leaving his family in Cadiz, until his return to France in 1863. Dehodencq, who rarely painted landscapes, was interested in urban crowd scenes and, unlike Fromentin, preferred to depict violent action rather than repose. Like Delacroix and Chassériau before him, Dehodencq was heavily dependent on the Jewish population of his city, particularly for female models: His oeuvre is filled with such subjects as the *Jewish Bride* or *Jewish Festival*, and with darker scenes of the arrest or punishment of incautious Jewish residents of the sultan's realm.

In Dehodencq, a Romantic taste for the dramatic and picturesque combined with a technique of precise mid-century realistic representation. The result, despite the similarity of subject matter, was strikingly different from that attained by Delacroix. Whereas the older artist strove for a generalized, timeless quality, Dehodencq, regardless of the size of his works, always creates a sense of minute reportage of detail. His unadorned studies of Spanish and Moroccan models sometimes give a rather uncomfortable feeling of immediacy, as in the pouting, untidy *Young Gypsy Girl* (Lucas coll., on loan to the Baltimore Museum of Art). Picturesquely dressed figures stare out challengingly, involving the viewer in what otherwise would be remote ethnographic scenes (*Jewish Bride and Black Servant Woman*, Musée de Reims). At worst this produces an excessively anecdotal quality, aggravated by exaggerated gestures and facial expressions; the violent actions and emotions of such scenes as the *Dance of the Black Men, Tangier* (Salon of 1874; Paris, Louvre) do not lend themselves well to detailed naturalistic rendering.

In other works done under the direct influence of Delacroix, like the *Jewish Festival at Tangier* (Salon of 1870; Musée



Fig. 76
 *Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Dance of the Almah*,
 1863. The Dayton Art Institute.

de Poitiers, fig. 73), Dehodencq avoids direct eye contact of figures with the viewer except in some of the subordinate figures, as is sometimes seen in the crowd scenes of masters like Veronese or Tiepolo. Delacroix, in his version of the subject (fig. 39; see also the copy by Renoir, fig. 144) had managed to avoid such viewer contact altogether, turning the scene in upon itself. In Dehodencq's version, the figures take up a larger proportion of the canvas, and their ethnic types and clothing are rendered in much greater detail; the result seems to some extent an accumulation of individual and group studies, rather than the unified, atmospheric treatment sought by Delacroix. It is, on the other hand, in keeping with the general mid-nineteenth century tendency toward greater veracity in recording observed visual details.

Like Fromentin, Dehodencq is perhaps seen at his best in his drawings, which capture the essence of the teeming life of Moroccan cities without the distracting detail or strident color often seen in the artist's paintings. The distinction, sharply maintained in the nineteenth century, between sketch and finished picture seems to have worked to the artist's disadvantage in the preparation of his large Salon paintings. Some of his oil studies also have a mysterious

poetry—as in the *Court of a Moroccan House* (c. 1860; Troyes, Musée des Beaux-Arts)—that is lacking in the more literal finished works.

Among the artists who visited the Near East in the 1850s armed with a precise technique of naturalistic representation, the most gifted by far was Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904). A student of Delaroche, then of Gleyre, Gérôme had already made his reputation in the late 1840s as the leader of a group of young “Neo-Grec” painters, executing antique subjects depicted in a precise and witty style. In 1854 he made a trip to Greece and Turkey, and two years later he spent eight months in Egypt in the company of several friends. From then on his trips to the Near East, particularly to Egypt, became frequent, continuing into the 1880s. At the Salon of 1857 he exhibited his first depictions of a Near Eastern subject, several views of the Colossi of Memnon in Egypt. Oriental subjects soon became an important part of his repertory, amounting to perhaps two thirds of his production.¹⁴ These works, which appeal more strongly to contemporary taste than most of Gérôme’s historical reconstructions of ancient Rome and the France of Louis XIV, gave Gérôme an influence on the Orientalism of the second half of the nineteenth century equal in importance to the position of Delacroix during the Romantic period. Gérôme’s influential position as a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and as a professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts also assured that his students would be given ample opportunities to display the painstaking approach learned in his studio.

Despite his great celebrity during his lifetime, in the twentieth century Gérôme, in part because of his alleged hostility to the Impressionists, fell into an obscurity from which he has only recently emerged.¹⁵ The most ambitious publications on Gérôme remain the lavish books that appeared in the late nineteenth century in the United States, home of the artist’s most enthusiastic patrons,¹⁶ and it is still in North America that the broadest selection of Gérôme’s Orientalist production may be seen.

Gérôme’s earliest Orientalist Salon pictures varied from grandiose views of the ruins of ancient civilizations (*The Plain of Thebes*, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts) to quiet genre scenes of contemporary life (*Egyptian Recruits crossing the Desert*, Salon of 1858; Toronto, coll. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Tanenbaum). The artist soon opted for the subdued approach, leaving dramatic pyrotechnics for his ambitious scenes of ancient Rome. Most of his Oriental pictures depict small groups of dancing girls, bathers, merchants, soldiers, and worshippers from the cafés, baths, streets, and mosques of Cairo and Constantinople. In an era that placed great emphasis on sentiment and anecdote, Gérôme’s genre paintings are remarkable for

Fig. 77 (right)
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Black Panther on the Watch*, 1851. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

Fig. 78 (far right)
*Charles Bargue, *A Bashi-Bazouk*, c. 1875.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 79
*Charles Bargue, *At His Devotions*. Elmira,
New York, Arnot Art Museum.



their objective detachment. Some of the paintings were executed from sketches made on the spot, but many more depict Parisian models posing with the vast store of Oriental costumes and props Gérôme brought back with him. This is particularly true of the fine bather scenes, like the *Moorish Bath* (1870; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, fig. 75); these owe more to the tradition of Rococo erotica than to the artist's Eastern experiences, yet present an array of Eastern decor and ethnic types that is convincingly authentic.

The sense of veracity in Gérôme's Oriental compositions was no accident; besides sketching and acquiring authentic Orientalia, Gérôme researched his subjects carefully, often consulting with experts on the area. He made every effort to match the decor to the region and historical background he intended to depict. The great Islamicist Richard Ettinghausen found Gérôme's depictions of Islamic architecture and decoration to be remarkably accurate: Individual buildings are recognizable, and even inscriptions on the walls are often clearly readable.¹⁷ Such precise documentation would not have interested the mature Delacroix, who used his knowledge of the Near East merely as a starting point for imaginative depictions. Gérôme's architectural paintings do not attempt to overwhelm the viewer; the artist generally avoided depicting the vast domed and tiled mosques of Constantinople in favor of the simpler columnar mosques of an earlier period, which perhaps he felt conveyed more convincingly the intensity of Muslim beliefs (*A Prayer in the Mosque*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; and *Interior of a Mosque*, Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, fig. 114).





Delacroix, *Hagar and Ishmael*,
New York, Stuart Pivar.

If in Paris Gérôme led an active social life and was well known to the fashionable set of the Jockey Club, in his paintings of the Near East he preferred portraying the common man and his surroundings to depictions of sultans and emirs. This may be seen in the paintings of *almahs*, or dancing girls (fig. 76), and of the more colorful types of soldiers: Bashi-Bazouks (irregular, unpaid Turkish troops who lived by plunder) and Arnauts (Albanian soldiers in the Turkish army, recognizable by their white pleated skirts). These warriors are not shown participating in their customary rapine, but rather singing, drinking, playing chess, or otherwise relaxing in their cafés and guardhouses, in the manner of much seventeenth-century Dutch military genre painting. Gerald M. Ackerman has aptly described a picture of this kind in terms of Gérôme's mastery of color and detail: "It is a Cairo scene painted with the tonal control and sense of values of a Terborch or a Pieter de Hooch and should be viewed and enjoyed in the same manner in which one enjoys works by these 17th century Dutch masters."¹⁸

The subjects discussed so far by no means exhaust Gérôme's repertory of Oriental materials. He frequently painted lions and other big cats loosely associated with the North African desert, beginning with the *Black Panther on the Watch* (1851; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, fig. 77). He also executed a few Orientalist history paintings; these works are discussed in the following chapter.



Antoine Lecomte du Noüy, *The Dream of Khosru*, 1874. Shaker Library, Mrs. Noah L. Butkin.

The consistent welcome given to Gérôme's meticulous Near Eastern genre subjects at the Salon, at a time when many critics frowned upon Courbet's Realist genre depictions of French courtesans, peasants, wrestlers and the like, is one of the curiosities of nineteenth-century art history. It was Courbet's unwillingness to "ennoble" his genre scenes by distancing them in time or space, rather than the large format of some of his pictures, that aroused critical ire. The ready acceptance of Chassériau's huge *Sabbath Day in the Jewish Quarter of Constantine* at the Salon of 1848 has already been noted. Gérôme was one of the chief beneficiaries of this greater toleration for genre paintings placed in exotic settings: His pictures brought enormous sums. Ingres's *Odalisque and Slave* (fig. 51) represents the grand manner of Italian Renaissance masters like Titian, applied to the format of Orientalist genre painting. Gérôme's works recall the equally disciplined, though more miniaturistic, conventions of Carel Fabritius, Vermeer, and the other Delft painters, who after 1850 literally were being rediscovered and admired anew by French critics.

Gérôme, who like Fromentin and Dehodencq belonged



to the generation of Courbet, was a professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for more than forty years. Several of the Orientalists who came into prominence during the 1860s and 1870s were pupils or associates of Gérôme who closely followed the master's style, yet displayed distinctive artistic personalities. One artist who is often described as a student of Gérôme, though in fact he was that artist's contemporary and collaborator, is the now largely forgotten Charles Bargue (c. 1825–1883).¹⁹ Bargue, who made his living as a printmaker, produced only a handful of canvases. In a work like *A Bashi-Bazouk* (c. 1875; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 78), a subject



Regnault, *Salome*, 1870. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

often seen in Gérôme's work, Barye reveals himself to be a finer colorist than Gérôme and a talented draftsman. Barye lacked Gérôme's compositional skills and usually limited himself to a single figure, painted in the studio with available costumes and props. He produced equally fine work in his rare watercolors, of which the *Algerian Guard* (Forty Fort, Pa., Coll. Andrew J. Sordani III) is a superb example.

Another artist closely associated with Gérôme was his exact contemporary and fellow student Gustave Boulanger (1824–1888). Boulanger is better known today for his "Neo-Grec" reconstructions of antiquity, a category of painting made famous by Gérôme. He nevertheless preceded his more famous friend to North Africa as early as 1845, and showed his first Orientalist picture, a *Moorish Café*, at the Salon of 1848. Boulanger's Oriental subject pictures, such as the *Odalisque* (New York, coll. Richard Seldin), parallel Gérôme's in their precise rendering of details, which however, are obviously studied from separate models and are not as smoothly integrated as in Gérôme's polished compositions.

The best Orientalists among Gérôme's students were Jean-Jules-Antoine Lecomte du Noüy (1842–1923), Paul Lenoir (1850–1881), and Albert Aublet (1851–1938), an artist whose mature style developed only after 1880. Lecomte du Noüy shared some of the flair for the dramatic shown by his master in historical paintings like Gérôme's *Death of Caesar*. He achieved his greatest success with *The Bearers of Bad Tidings* of 1871, a lurid but effective scene of violence set in ancient Egypt.²⁰ Lecomte du Noüy's scenes of Near Eastern life, unlike Gérôme's, are sometimes bizarre and imaginary, as in the opium fantasy *The Dream* (Shaker Heights, Ohio, coll. Mrs. Noah L. Butkin, fig. 81), a Persian subject that possibly is identical with *Le Kieff du Schériff*, a picture sold in Paris on March 23, 1877. Alternatively, the picture may depict *The Dream of Khosru*, a story of a Sassanian Persian king derived from the tragedy *Cosroès* by the seventeenth-century dramatist Jean de Rotrou. Paul Lenoir, author of an account of Gérôme's travels in Egypt published in 1872, sought exoticism further afield by traveling to the Far East. He was too short-lived to develop a clearly defined personal style; his *Veiled Woman Carrying a Jug* (Washington, coll. Michael Teague) does not differ greatly from pictures of the 1870s by Léon Bonnat, Hippolyte Lecomte-Vernet and others depicting Egyptian fellah women (fig. 82).

During the 1860s several young painters unconnected with Gérôme came to prominence with work in the traditional Orientalist mode. The most brilliant of these was Henri Regnault (1843–1871), a contemporary of the Impressionists who was killed in the Franco-Prussian War. Winner of the *Prix de Rome* in 1866,

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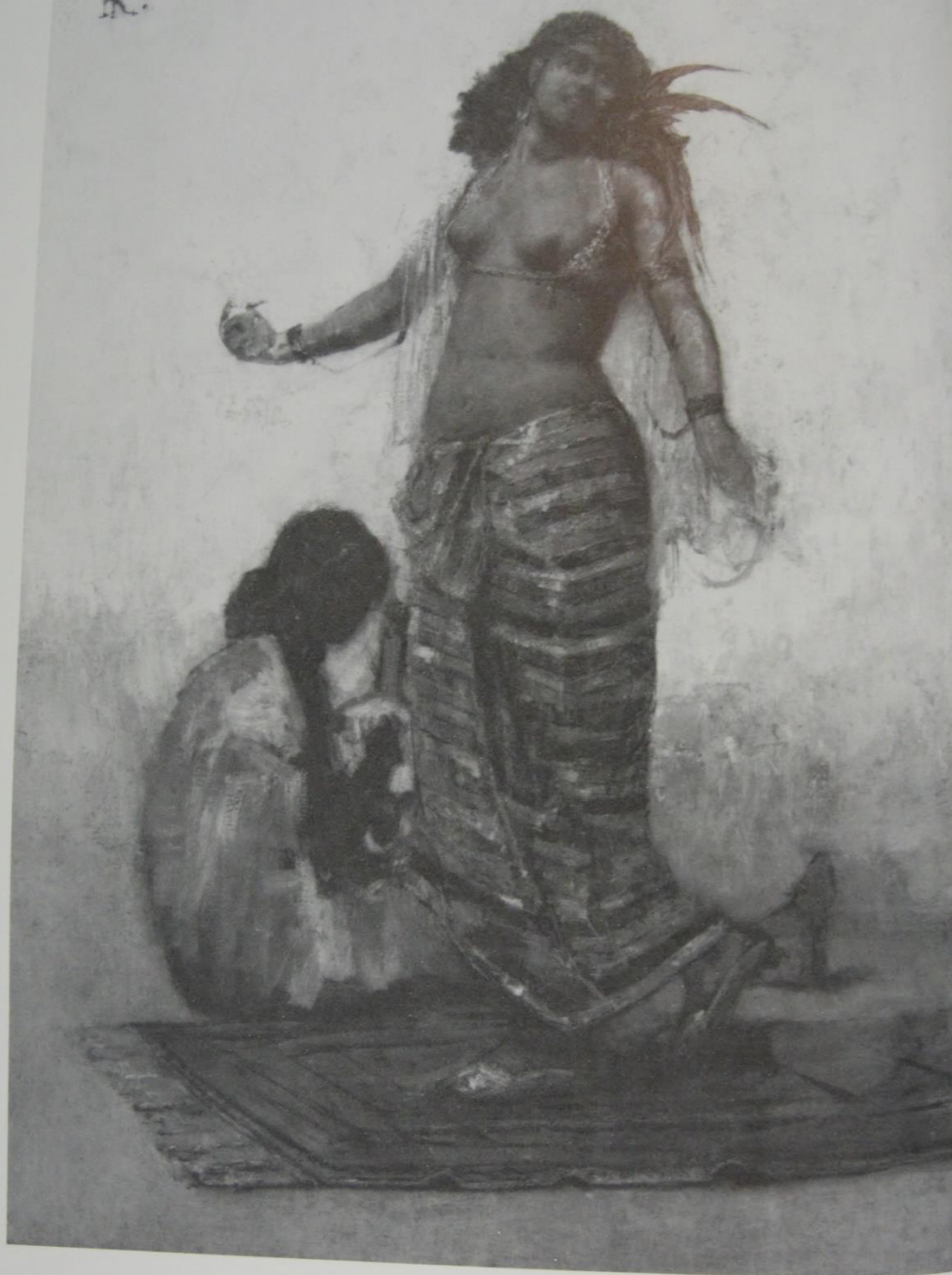




Fig. 84 (left)
*Henri Regnault, *Slave Girl*. The
Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Fig. 86 (above)
*Henri Regnault, *Head of a Moor*.
Washington, The Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Regnault soon was influenced by the dazzling technique of Mariano Fortuny, a Spanish painter residing in Rome (see Chapter VIII). Probably with the encouragement of the Spanish artist, Regnault went to Madrid to study the works of Velázquez, then, in 1870, to Tangier, where he worked on such compositions as *The Departure for the Powder-Play*, *The Pasha's Departure from Tangier*, and the melodramatic, though flawlessly painted, *Execution under the Moorish Kings of Granada* (Louvre), which shares the straining for effect seen in some of the contemporary works of Dehodencq. There he also added to his celebrated *Salome* (Salon of 1870; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 83), begun as a study of an Italian peasant girl and expanded into an Oriental subject under such intermediate titles as *Study of an African Woman*.²¹ The temptress, who with a slightly different treatment could represent Prosper Mérimée's gypsy, *Carmen*, is identified as an Oriental principally by such accessories as the sword and basin, stool, and animal-skin rug, all relatively late additions to the composition. The application of such large-scale naturalism to an historical subject, which seemed quite daring at the time, has lost nearly all of its shock value with the passage of a century.

Regnault's repertory of Oriental subjects in 1870, including historical execution scenes and genre subjects like the Minneapolis *Slave Girl* (fig. 84) does not differ greatly from that explored by Delacroix in the 1820s, before the trip to North Africa; his approach recalls that of the Romantics rather than the more subdued realism practiced by Gérôme. In the use of a naturalistic academic technique, often applied on a large scale to flamboyant effect, Regnault's work resembles that of his mentor Fortuny in its virtuosity. It is not possible to say whether the young French painter would have evolved a less superficial view of North African life had his career not been so abruptly cut short. Regnault's late Romantic approach was continued by his friend and fellow disciple of Fortuny's Orientalism, Georges Clairin (1843–1919), who traveled with Regnault in Spain and Morocco in 1870. Clairin made his debut as an Orientalist at the Salon of 1874, showing a *Massacre of the Abencerages at Granada* (Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts), as well as some watercolor views of the Alhambra and of Tangier. He continued to show Orientalist works at the Salons until World War I, though he was also very active as a portraitist and decorative painter. Clairin favored complex genre scenes placed in the historic setting of Moorish Granada: *Entering the Harem* (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, fig. 87) is a typical example.

Clairin's career was paralleled by that of the highly successful Benjamin Constant (1845–1902), who, like Regnault and

Regnault, *Judith*, 1868. New York,
d Gallery Associates.

far right)
s Clairin, *Entering the Harem*, 1870s.
re, Walters Art Gallery.



Ben Constant
Clairin before him, met Mariano Fortuny in Granada in the early 1870s and traveled on to Morocco. A prolific painter of genre (figs. 88-90), including some scenes of violence, Constant in the twentieth century has held the place of critical disfavor among the Orientalists occupied by Bouguereau and Cabanel among painters of Classical themes. At the Salon of 1876 he exhibited a rare historical subject, *The Entry of Mehmet II into Constantinople, 1453* (Toulouse, Musée des Augustins), that won him a medal despite the lack of enthusiasm of some art critics. Constant's Orientalist subjects, which were popular with American and Canadian collectors, date largely from the 1870s and early 1880s; thereafter he concentrated increasingly on decorative projects and on his portraits, which were immensely popular with the British aristocracy.





Fig. 89
Benjamin Constant, *The Scarf Dance*.
Toughkeepsie, New York, Vassar College Art
Gallery.

Among the other young painters specializing in North African genre scenes and landscapes the most original was Gustave-Achille Guillaumet (1840–1887). Like Fromentin he painted Algerian scenes that were subdued in color and action, and like the older artist he was a literary man as well as a painter: Guillaumet's *Tableaux algériens* (Paris, 1888), a collection of articles that had been published in the *Nouvelle Revue* between 1879 and 1884, and his *Lettres d'un voyageur* (Paris, 1888) give many insights into the painter's approach to his North African subjects.

Guillaumet's early Salon pictures of the 1860s included such grim subjects as *The Desert* (1867; Paris, Musée d'Orsay, fig. 91) which, in its exaggerated bleakness, calls to mind the fantasy academicism of a twentieth-century Surrealist like Salvador Dalí. In the large *Famine in Algeria* (Salon of 1869) he explored the pathos of a subject recalling the plague and disaster pictures of eighteenth-century artists like Doyen and David, or such nineteenth-century examples as Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* and Delacroix's *Massacre of Chios*.

Guillaumet soon settled on less melodramatic themes, and moved south to the oasis of Bou Saada in order to depict the unchanged daily life of Algerians far removed from European contamination. He produced many studies of sun-baked buildings (*A Town in Kabyle, Algeria*, Seattle, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington) as well as large interior scenes showing the harsh lives of the women of the oasis (*Algerian Interior*, Norfolk, Va., Chrysler Museum). Guillaumet's concentration on the dreary everyday life of this impoverished community led him to be described as a North African follower of Millet, the painter of peasant laborers. Guillaumet's figures lack the grandeur of Millet's, though on the other hand the artist avoids the histrionics of Dehodencq or of Fromentin's *The Land of Thirst*. His is a quiet, unpretentious art, perhaps possible only because of the popularity of working-class realist genre subjects during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

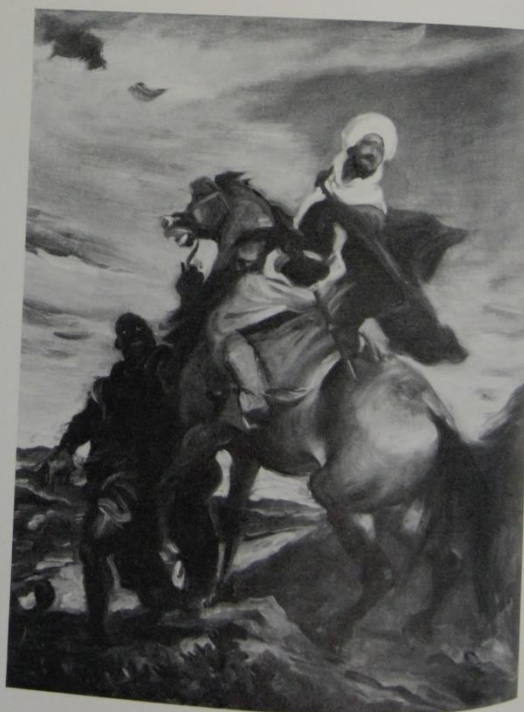
Guille Guillaumet, *Moroccan*
ly Hills, California, Ashkenazy





Fig. 94 (right)
 *Alfred Dehodencq, *Sketch for King Boabdil's Farewell to Granada*, 1869. Notre Dame, Ind., courtesy The Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame.

Fig. 95
 *Alexandre Cabanel, *Cleopatra Testing Poisons on Condemned Men*, Salon of 1887. New York, Stuart Pivar



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